

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES

Home Front 1939-1945 (part two)

How did Britain fight the war at home?

Key Stages 4-5 | Second World War 1939-1945

Themed collection



Introduction

The purpose of this document collection is to allow students and teachers to develop their own questions and lines of historical enquiry on the political and social aspects of the Home Front, 1939-1945. The documents themselves are arranged according to theme, so that sources are grouped together rather than following a strict chronological order.

Suitable for:

KS 4-5

Time period:

Second World War 1939-1945

Connections to curriculum:

Key Stage Four

Edexcel GCSE History:

- C 1900– present: Warfare and British society in the modern era
- Experience of war: The impact of war on civilians, including recruitment and the organisation of a Home Front during Second World Wars. Government use of censorship and propaganda in wartime.
- The historic environment: London and the Second World War, 1939–45

OCR GCSE History:

- The First and Second World Wars: the beginnings of 'total war', including the impact on people's lives, increased state power and the changing relationship between the state and the people.

Key Stage Five

AQA GCE History:

- The People's War and Peace, 1939–1951
- The social and cultural impact of 'total' war: conscription; women and children; civil liberties and restrictions; propaganda; the Blitz; plans for reconstruction including Beveridge and the Butler Act; policies of post-war Labour government, including the creation of the NHS and medical advances.

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Contents	Page 3
Teacher's notes	Page 5
Background	Page 10
External links	Page 12

Theme 1: Everyday Life

Notes on the need for food control and the reasons for rationing	Page 13
Ration Book, 1940	Page 15
Poster entitled 'Dig for Plenty' with artist's signature 'BAN'	Page 18
Ministry of Information poster: 'Another great British Salvage campaign'	Page 20
Sketch by the cartoonist Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird)	Page 22
Poster: 'Paper, Metal, Bones, Rags and Rubber for salvage'	Page 24
Poster entitled 'Help put the lid on Hitler by saving our old metal and paper'	Page 26
War Cabinet memorandum on the rationing of clothing	Page 28
Leaflet issued by the Board of Trade	Page 30
A Ministry of Information poster entitled 'Go through your Wardrobe'	Page 33
Results of an investigation recording attitudes towards clothes rationing	Page 35
Evidence of Detective Inspector Capstick used in case Rex v. Glazier and Leigh	Page 38
Poster from the Ministry of Fuel and Power entitled 'We cut the coal'	Page 40
Poster entitled 'Watch Your Meters'	Page 42
Progress report on supplying different Ministry of Information posters	Page 44
Poster: 'Natural and Industrial Resources'	Page 46

Theme 2: Women at War

'The Land Girl' magazine, No. 1, Volume 4, April 1943	Page 49
Poem printed in 'The Land Girl' magazine	Page 52
Cartoon published in 'The Land Girl' magazine	Page 55
Recruiting poster for the Women's Land Army	Page 57
Women's Land Army parade in Staffordshire	Page 59
Photograph from 'The Land girl' magazine: 'Gathering cabbages in Essex'	Page 60

Contents

Advice from the Women's Voluntary Services	Page 62
Poster entitled 'Just a good afternoon's work!'	Page 66
Army recruitment poster entitled 'ATS at the wheel'	Page 68
Public information poster encouraging women to work in factories	Page 70
Ministry of Information poster with a photograph showing women at work	Page 72
Photograph showing two women war workers on the railways	Page 74
Photograph showing two women working on a steam locomotive	Page 76
Women in engineering flight gang refuelling and checking and aircraft	Page 78
'Spotters' in the ATS (Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service)	Page 79
Women working with the Colossus (a prototype computer)	Page 80
Theme 3: Spies	
Extract from a Government broadcast on the work of secret agents	Page 82
Artwork for a poster to be used in the 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' campaign	Page 84
A poster using the 'Keep Mum, she's not so dumb!' slogan	Page 86
Poster: 'Don't forget that walls have ears' by Fougasse	Page 88
Extract from the MI5 account of the capture of Karel Richter	Page 90
Extract from the case file on Karel Richter	Page 92
Search of field for equipment buried by Karel Richter before his capture	Page 95
Extract from a report giving details of Karel Richter's mission	Page 96

Teacher's notes

There are **three themes** covered in this collection (**Part 2**). We have provided questions/tasks for some of the sources in each theme. Please note that there are not questions for every source, except for those indicated in these notes. Some questions however link to other referenced sources in the collection for learners to explore at the same time. The questions can also be found on the relevant source pages for convenience with additional notes to provide context.

To accompany both part one and two of the Home Front document collections, we have linked to a collection of original films¹ from the Imperial War Museum about life on the Home Front. We provide questions on these films and there is also a task outlined below:

Watch a film and discuss/answer the questions:

- Select 3 to 5 documents from either Home Front collection to show how they can be used to support the message and content of one or more of the films.
- Write a report/record a video to explain your choice of documents.
- What are the advantages of using public information films like these with document sources as evidence for life on the Home Front?

¹ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/home-front-1939-1945-film-sources-2/>

1. Everyday Life: rationing; salvage; 'make do and mend'; black market.

Document: Notes on the need for food control and the reasons for rationing Catalogue ref: INF 1/343

- What two reasons made rationing necessary according to the Government?
- Take a look at the ration book, Catalogue ref: BT 131/40. Can you explain how the ration book was used?
- How and why were people encouraged to grow their own food in the poster: Catalogue ref: INF 3/97?

Advertisement: Board of Trade explains reasons for clothing rationing: Catalogue ref: BT

Teacher's notes

64/3026

- How does this source explain that rationing meant 'fair shares for all'?
- What were the findings of an investigation into attitudes towards clothes rationing, Catalogue ref: BT 64/4101?
- What was the Black market? See source on the illegal sale of coupons, Catalogue ref: CRIM 1/1387.

Poster: Poster illustrating how salvage would help Britain defeat Hitler, Catalogue ref: INF 3/203

- Can you explain how words and image are used to persuade people to not waste metal and paper?
- Look at the poster designed by Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird) used in the salvage campaign, Catalogue ref: INF 13/148
- What is the message of this poster?
- Which of these salvage posters is more effective in your opinion?
- Why were people encouraged to salvage books during the war? Catalogue ref: INF 2/47
- How could the book campaign be used to help keep up public morale?

Poster from the Ministry of Information for the 'Make do and Mend' campaign, Catalogue ref: INF 13/144/1

- Can you explain the connection between this 'Make do and mend' poster and the War Cabinet memorandum on the rationing of clothing, 1941, Catalogue ref: PREM 3/96/1?
- Why are women targeted in this advert 'Watch Your Meters' poster Catalogue ref: INF 13/299 (31)

2. Women at War: Women's Land Army; women's voluntary services; women in factories.

Recruiting poster: for the Women's Land Army, Catalogue ref: INF 13/140/19

- Can you explain how words and image are used to persuade women to join the Land

Teacher's notes

Army?

- Why did the government want women to join the Women's Land Army?
- Do you think it provides a realistic picture of work on the land? Explain your ideas.
- Why could the Women's Land Army not rest in 1943? What were they trying to do according to 'the Land Girl' magazine? Catalogue ref: MAF 59/22
- What does the poem called 'A land girl's day' and the cartoon called 'Women's Land Army' reveal about the life of a land girl?
- Why do you think the Ministry of Agriculture did not use this photograph of women gathering cabbages as a poster to recruit for the Land Army? Catalogue ref: MAF 59/22

Document: Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence (WVS), Catalogue ref: MAF 102/11

- What does this source show about importance of women in the organisation of the government's wartime food campaign?
- What general support did the WVS provide on the Home front?

Photograph from Ministry of Information showing women at work, Catalogue ref: INF 2/8

- What work are women doing in this factory to contribute to the war effort?
- How is this government poster encouraging women to work in factories? Comment on the words and image used. Catalogue ref: INF 3/403
- How is this government poster encouraging women to join the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service)? Comment on the words and image used. Catalogue ref: INF 13/42
- Find four sources showing different jobs carried out by women during the Second World War.
- What is the message of this recruitment poster aimed at women? Catalogue ref: INF 3/400

3. Spies: campaign addressing careless talk; the case of Karel Richter.

Poster: 'Keep Mum, she's not so dumb!' Catalogue ref: INF 13/217/20

- The men in this poster are wearing uniforms. Can you identify which of the armed forces

Teacher's notes

they are serving in?

- Do we have any clues who the woman is? What do you think she could be?
- Who is the poster aimed at? What is its message?
- Do you think this poster would be used today? Give reasons for your answer.
- Look at two other posters: 'Be careful what you say' Catalogue ref: INF 3/232 and 'Don't forget walls have ears!' Catalogue ref: INF 13/217/28. How do these posters deliver the message about the dangers of careless talk?
- Which of the three posters featured in this collection is the most effective? Explain your reasons for choosing it.

Document: Extract from a report giving details of spy Karel Richter's mission Catalogue ref: KV 2/31

- What was Karel Richter sent to Britain to do?
- Why do you think Richter was asked to collect information on roads, railways, gas masks and identity cards?
- Why would Nazi Germany want this kind of information?
- Why was Richter told to change the money he was given at ports rather than in large cities or banks?
- Part of this document has been kept secret. Can you think of a reason why it has been kept secret?
- How much damage would Richter have done if he had achieved his mission?
- Read the MI5 account of the capture of Karel Richter, Catalogue ref: KV 2/32. What makes the policeman suspicious of Richter?

Document: Extract from the case file on the interrogation of Karel Richter, Catalogue ref: KV 2/32

- How does the MI5 Officer describe Karel Richter? Why does he think this?
- Why does Richter decide to admit that he was a spy?
- Look at the list of items found in the field.
- Which items would be of no more use after Richter had landed?
- Which items would Richter have needed to carry out his mission?

Students could work with a group of sources or source type on a certain theme or linked themes. The documents should offer them a chance to develop their powers of evaluation and analysis and support their course work. Alternatively, teachers may wish to use the

Teacher's notes

collection to develop their own resources or encourage students to 'curate' their own 'exhibition' of the most significant sources on the topic.

Please note that content in this themed collection has been redeveloped from content in our [Home Front 1939-1945](#) focussed topic website which has been archived as the interactive parts no longer work.

Background

Home Front 1939-1945: Fighting the war at home.

Britain had always prided itself on its island position which made it feel safe from assault. However, around a third of Britain's food was imported via ships, meaning that the food supply was vulnerable to attack from the air or by sea.

Sir William Beveridge, the Minister of Food, knew that Britain had to be as self-sufficient in food as far as possible. So pasture must be ploughed up and crops such as wheat, corn, barley planted. Farmers were encouraged to turn from raising cattle to sheep because most cattle feed came from abroad whereas sheep grazed on grass.

A number of British farms were inefficient, using old machinery and methods that had not changed in decades. Such farms were requisitioned and – harsh but necessary – the tenant farmers evicted, to be taken over by the Ministry of Agriculture.

At the other end of the chain was consumption, which needed to be controlled and food distributed fairly among the population. Therefore, in January 1940 the issuing of ration books with coupons came into effect. Different food stuffs required a certain number of coupons and this changed according to the season and availability of items. So, it was pointless to take a shopping list, you could only buy what was available. The government tried to help with leaflets and broadcasts giving suggested recipes. Predictably the system did not always run smoothly and there were complaints that men needed more meat because of the heavy work they did.

Though Prime Minister Winston Churchill initially warned that rationing clothes was a measure too far and would lower morale, on 1st June 1941 clothes rationing followed. The move was kept secret until the last minute in an attempt to avoid panic buying. Women tackled the problem with ingenuity. Bedspreads were turned into dressing gowns and the wool from knitted garments was unravelled and re-knitted into warm jumpers for use at home or by fighting men. Women could only buy very plain clothes: frills, pockets and lace trimmings were forbidden and skirt lengths shortened. Men's suits were made or altered to have very narrow lapels; trousers were shortened as much as they could be without the wearer feeling ridiculous.

The purchase of many other goods was restricted too. Wood was needed to construct and repair planes and for other urgent military purposes, hence the introduction of

Background

utility furniture, characterised by the absence of fussy decoration in its design. It looked pleasingly like modern Scandinavian furniture! Rationing was very gradually reduced after the war, but it was not until 1954 that the final foodstuff, meat, was no longer 'on the coupon'.

Another fundamental shift in society was in regards to the role of women. Despite being American, the 'Rosie the Riveter' poster was an iconic symbol of the shift in cultural attitudes towards women. With her hair pushed back under a scarf, and her strong muscular arm holding a spanner, the picture was an encouragement for women to do whatever it took to help the war effort.

Women were never conscripted to fight, however their contributions to maintaining morale on the home front during these tumultuous years, as well as their service in the Land Army, amongst other organizations, was invaluable. At its peak in 1944, there were over 800,000 'land girls' who engaged in a variety of jobs on the land – driving tractors, killing rats and various other unpleasant roles.

Government propaganda served as a way of persuading people to support various home front campaigns to help win the war. Eye catching posters and leaflets with sharp messaging were produced by the Ministry of Information on a huge array of topics including the dangers of 'Careless talk', the need to 'Dig for Victory' or 'Make do and mend' and others. This information was displayed in shops and shop windows, council buildings and village halls. The Ministry of Information also made films and radio broadcasts to bring its messages home and you can watch some of the films with this document collection. Some of the nation's most significant artists, cartoonists and film makers produced work for the Ministry of Information.

Despite the destruction of the war, Britain slowly managed to reconstruct the country, and the informal contract between the people and the government began to be realised with the formation of the welfare state.

Juliet Gardiner, author: 'The Thirties'; 'Wartime Britain'; 'Joining the Dots: A Woman in Her Time'.

External links

- For further sources search [the collections at the Imperial War Museum](https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections)¹
- Find a wealth of [visual material on the Art of War](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/art-war/)²
- Find out more about [life on the Home front from National Museum of Scotland](https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/second-world-war/sections/home-front)³
- [National Archives blog on civilian honours during Second World War](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/rewarding-gallantry-on-the-home-front-civilian-honours-in-the-second-world-war/)⁴
- [National Archives blog on the Home Guard](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-home-guard/)⁵
- [National Archives blog on women in Second World War art](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/women-in-second-world-war-art/)⁶
- [National Archives blog on the Beveridge Report 1942 and foundation of the Welfare state](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/beveridge-report-foundations-welfare-state/)⁷

¹ <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>

² <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/art-war/>

³ <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/second-world-war/sections/home-front>

⁴ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/rewarding-gallantry-on-the-home-front-civilian-honours-in-the-second-world-war/>

⁵ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-home-guard/>

⁶ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/women-in-second-world-war-art/>

⁷ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/beveridge-report-foundations-welfare-state/>

Notes on the need for food control and the reasons for rationing, 1939-1940. Catalogue ref: INF 1/343

GENERAL NOTE ON RATIONING AND ITS PLACE IN FOOD CONTROL

Ministry
of Food

1. A Minister of Food has been appointed to take charge, as from the outset of the war, of the food supplies of the country as a whole.

The need for food control was shown by the experience gained in the last war. Economy and orderly distribution at fair prices are vital to the Home Front in war.

During 1917 schemes for the distribution of the main commodities were in process of formation. The difficulties were also growing. In the autumn of 1917 successive shortages appeared in several important commodities, apart from sugar which had been in short supply for many months. The visible result of these shortages were the queues outside retail shops. They began in a few places for tea and bacon. The main commodities in short or irregular supply were butter, margarine and potatoes, and finally meat.

Rationing began for sugar in January, 1918, was extended gradually and locally during the next few months to meat, including bacon and fats. It did not become general even for those foods until July, 1918. It developed piecemeal out of schemes administered by local Food Control Committees.

Rationing

3. Individual rationing is the final stage of orderly and organised distribution. The objects are to secure a definite standard of economy in the use of food and to divide supplies fairly among the population and among traders.

Notes on the need for food control and the reasons for rationing, 1939-1940. Catalogue ref: INF 1/343

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 and very high prices for what was left, making it very difficult for a lot of people to get enough to eat.

Transcript

GENERAL NOTE ON RATIONING AND ITS PLACE IN FOOD CONTROL

Ministry of Food

1. A Minister of Food has been appointed to take charge, as from the outset of the war, of the food supplies of the country as a whole.

...

The need for food control was shown by the experience gained in the last war. Economy and orderly distribution at fair prices are vital to the Home Front in war.

...

During 1917 schemes for the distribution of the main commodities were in process of formation. The difficulties were also growing. In the autumn of 1917 successive shortages appeared in several important commodities, apart from sugar which had been in short supply for many months. The visible result of these shortages were the queues outside retail shops. They began in a few places for tea and bacon. The main commodities in short or irregular supply were butter, margarine and potatoes, and finally meat.

...

Rationing began for sugar in January, 1918, was extended gradually and locally during the next few months to meat, including bacon and fats. It did not become general even for those foods until July, 1918. It developed piecemeal out of schemes administered by local Food Control Committees.

Rationing

3. Individual rationing is the final stage of orderly and organised distribution. The objects are to secure a definite standard of economy in the use of food and to divide supplies fairly among the population and among traders.

Ration Book, 1940.

Catalogue ref: BT 131/40

**How to use
this Ration Book**

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENT OR GUARDIAN

PAGE 3

1. **Write the child's name** in BLOCK letters in the space provided on the reference leaf (page 16).
2. **To buy any food that is rationed** you must register the child with a shop which sells that food.
3. **How to register with a shop.** Write the names and addresses of the shopkeepers with whom you intend to register the child in the spaces inside the front cover.
4. **Write your name and the child's name and address** (in BLOCK letters) and the date on the top of the pages of coupons numbered 7, 8 and (if margarine and cooking fats are rationed) 9 and 10.
5. Then take this book to the shops from which you mean to buy the child's butchers' meat, bacon and ham, sugar, butter and any other foods which may be rationed. The shopkeeper with whom you are registered will write the name and address on the counterfoil, which he will cut off and keep.
6. **Every time you buy rationed food** for the child you must hand this ration book in at the shop, and the shopkeeper will cut off the correct coupons. (You cannot use coupons which you yourself have taken off).
7. To save trouble you may tell the shopkeeper to take the whole page of coupons. If you do so you must first write the child's name and address and sign your name in the space provided on the page, and the shopkeeper must write the words "Page deposited" in the number of the page and the date, below his name and address inside the cover.
8. **BUT** do not have a whole page taken out if you expect the child to go away from home to a boarding school or on holiday.
9. **COUPONS NOT USED IN THE WEEK FOR WHICH THEY ARE INTENDED CANNOT BE USED LATER.** Cut them off and destroy them.
10. **If the child lives in a hotel, boarding house, or similar establishment, do not take this book to the hotel, but hand it to the manager or whoever is responsible for the feeding**

PAGE 2

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF RETAILERS.

RETAIL BUTCHER. (Page 6.)

Name

Address

BACON RETAILER. (Page 6.)

Name

Address

SUGAR RETAILER. (Page 7.)

Name

Address

BUTTER RETAILER. (Page 8.)

Name

Address

MARGARINE RETAILER. (Page 9.)

Name

Address

RETAILER OF COOKING FATS, INCLUDING LARD AND DRIPPING. (Page 10.)

Name

Address

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

**Your
Ration Book**

Issued to safeguard your food supply

Name

Address

NATIONAL REGISTRATION NUMBER

Date of Issue

If found, please return to

FOOD OFFICE.

OFFICIAL PAID

Serial Number of Book
BL 796254

R.B.2 (Child).

Ration Book, 1940.

Catalogue ref: BT 131/40

Food rationing was introduced in January 1940. Everybody was issued with a ration book. This contained coupons that had to be handed in to the shops every time rationed food was bought. As well as the basic ration everybody had 16 coupons each month that they could spend on what they wished. This ensured that everyone was able to buy and eat the basic food necessary to keep healthy. Bacon, butter and sugar were among the first things to be rationed. Some foods such as potatoes, fruit and fish were not rationed. People were able to buy these things, provided they could afford them and there were supplies in the shops.

Transcript

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

Your Ration Book

Issued to safeguard your food supply

Name

Address

National Registration Number

Date of Issue

If found, please return to

FOOD OFFICE

Serial Number of Book

BL 796254

R.B.2 (Child)

...

Page 2

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF RETAILERS.

RETAIL BUTCHER (Page 5.)

Name

Address

BACON RETAILER (Page 6.)

Name

Address

SUGAR RETAILER (Page 7.)

Name

Address

BUTTER RETAILER (Page 8.)

Name

Ration Book, 1940.

Catalogue ref: BT 131/40

Address

MARGARINE RETAILER (Page 9.)

Name

Address

RETAILER OF COOKING FATS, INCLUDING LARD AND DRIPPING. (Page 10.)

Name

Address

...

Page 3

How to use this Ration Book

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENT OR GUARDIAN

1. Write the child's name in BLOCK letters in the space provided on the reference leaf (page 16).
2. To buy any food that is rationed you must register the child with a shop which sells that food.
3. How to register with a shop. Write the names and addresses of the shopkeepers with whom you intend to register the child in the spaces inside the front cover.
4. Write your name and the child's name and address (in BLOCK letters) and the date on the counterfoil at the top of the pages of coupons numbered 5, 6, 7, 8 and (if margarine and cooking fats are rationed) 9 and 10.
5. Then take this book to the shops from which you mean to buy the child's butcher's meat, bacon and ham, sugar, butter and any other foods which may be rationed. The shopkeeper with whom you are registered for each of these foods will write his name and address on the counterfoil, which he will cut off and keep.
6. Every time you buy rationed food for the child you must hand this ration book in at the shop, and the shopkeeper will cut off the correct coupons. (You cannot use coupons which you yourself have taken off).
7. To save trouble you may tell the shopkeeper to take a whole page of coupons. If you do so you must first write the child's name and address and sign your name in the space provided on the page, and the shopkeeper must write the words "Page deposited", the number of the page and the date, below his name and address inside the cover.
8. BUT do not have a whole page taken out if you expect the child to go away from home to a boarding school or on holiday.
9. COUPONS NOT USED IN THE WEEK FOR WHICH THEY ARE INTENDED CANNOT BE USED LATER. Cut them off and destroy them.
10. If the child lives in a hotel, boarding house, or similar establishment, do not take this book to a shop yourself – hand it to the manager or whoever is responsible for the feeding...

Poster entitled 'Dig for Plenty' with artist's signature 'BAN', 1939-1945. Catalogue ref: INF 3/97



Poster entitled 'Dig for Plenty' with artist's signature 'BAN', 1939-1945. Catalogue ref: INF 3/97

This poster was used as part of the government campaign 'Dig for Plenty' to encourage people to grow their food, similar to other campaigns such as 'Lend a Hand on the Land', 'Dig for Victory' or 'Battle for Bread'.

The 'Dig for Victory' campaign, started in October 1939, was one of the most famous of the war. It encouraged people to use every spare piece of land, including their gardens, to grow vegetables.

Transcript

Dig for plenty.

Grow food in your garden or get an allotment

Ministry of Information poster entitled 'Another great British Salvage campaign', 1942-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/47

Another great British Salvage campaign

70 MILLION BOOKS COLLECTED

50,000,000 books in 11 months



70,000,000 books in 14 months—up to December 1943



Scrutineers sort the books into three categories ...



1 Repulping for munitions



2 Restocking blitzed libraries



3 For Services' reading

Ministry of Information poster entitled 'Another great British Salvage campaign', 1942-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/47

Transcript

Another great British Salvage campaign

70 MILLION BOOKS COLLECTED

50,000,000 books in 11 months

70,000,000 books in 14 months – up to December 1943

Scrutineers sort the books into three categories...

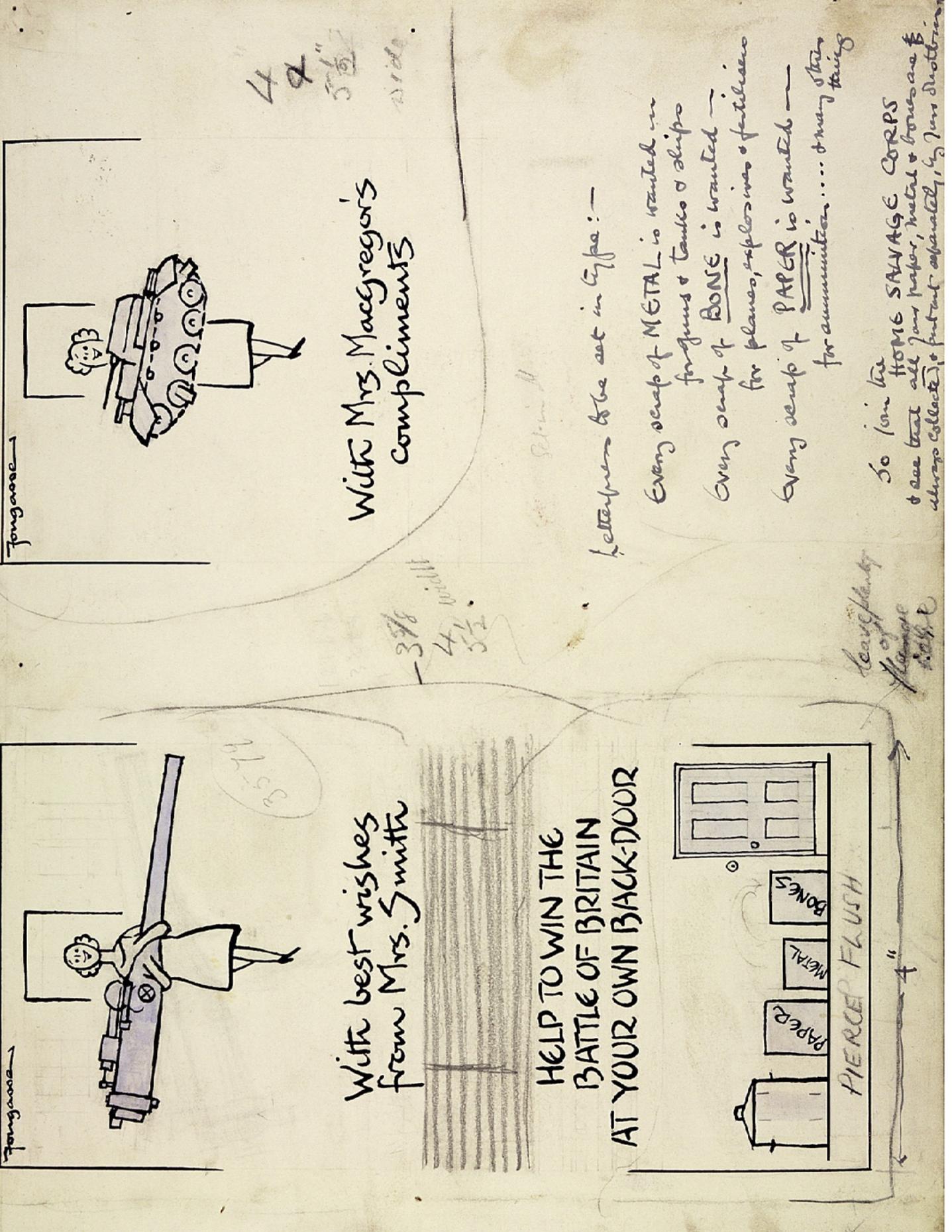
1 Repulping for munitions

2 Restocking blitzed libraries

3 For Services' reading

Sketch by the cartoonist Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird), 1939-45.

Catalogue Ref: INF 3/220



Sketch by the cartoonist Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird), 1939-45.

Catalogue Ref: INF 3/220

In 1939 most of the fuel, food and raw materials used in Britain was bought abroad and transported here by ship. This caused big problems at the start of the war. German submarines and aircraft were able to start weakening Britain's defences by attacking the ships and destroying supplies of resources essential for making weapons and fighting the war.

The government needed to try and make the country as self-sufficient as possible. Any savings that could be made in the use of fuel, food and raw materials from abroad meant that fewer sailors had to risk their lives on the boats, and more money could be put into fighting the war.

Transcript

[Illustration of a smiling woman carrying a large gun:]

"With best wishes from Mrs. Smith"

[Illustration of a smiling woman carrying a tank:]

"With Mrs MacGregor's compliments"

"Help to win the Battle of Britain at your own back door"

[Illustration of a bin and boxes labelled 'paper', 'metal', and 'bones' outside a door.]

Letterpress to be set in type:-

Every scrap of METAL is wanted – for guns and tanks and ships

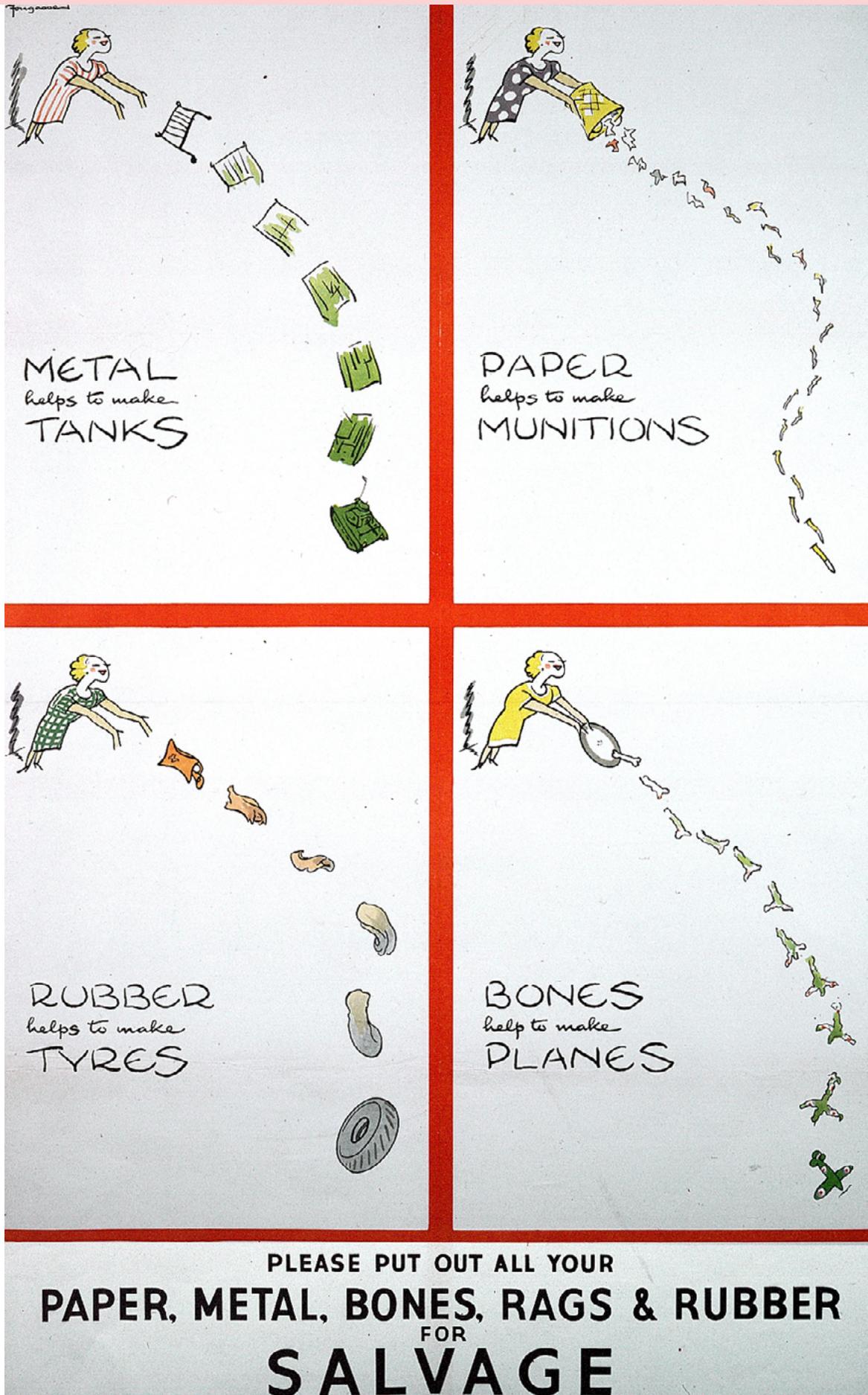
Every scrap of BONE is wanted – for planes, explosives and fertilisers

Every scrap of PAPER is wanted – for ammunition... and many other things

So join the HOME SALVAGE CORPS

and see that all your paper, metal and bones are always collected, and put out separately, by your dustbin

Poster: 'Paper, Metal, Bones, Rags and Rubber for salvage' designed by Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird), 1939-45. Catalogue Ref: INF/13/148



Poster: 'Paper, Metal, Bones, Rags and Rubber for salvage' designed by Fougasse (Cyril Kenneth Bird), 1939-45. Catalogue Ref: INF/13/148

Information campaigns were used to encourage people to make better use of resources at home, especially waste. These campaigns were a bit like the ones we have today to encourage us to be environmentally friendly by saving electricity and recycling rubbish.

Posters, information leaflets and slogans persuaded and reminded everyone that they had a part to play in fighting the war on the 'Home Front'. 'Saucepans for Spitfires' was one of the most famous campaigns. People were asked to give their aluminium pans so that they could be melted down to make parts for aircraft. In fact the government did not need any more aluminium but it believed the appeal meant people felt that they were doing something to defeat Hitler and helped to keep morale up.

Transcript

METAL helps to make TANKS

PAPER helps to make MUNITIONS

RUBBER helps to make TYRES

BONES help to make PLANES

PLEASE PUT OUT ALL YOUR PAPER, METAL, BONES, RAGS AND RUBBER FOR SALVAGE

Poster entitled 'Help put the lid on Hitler by saving our old metal and paper', 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/203



Help put the lid on Hitler
BY SAVING YOUR
OLD METAL AND PAPER

Poster entitled 'Help put the lid on Hitler by saving our old metal and paper', 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/203

Transcript

Help put the lid on Hitler by saving your old metal and paper

War Cabinet memorandum on the rationing of clothing, 1941.

Catalogue ref: PREM 3/96/1

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.)

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

MOST SECRET.

W.P. (41) 105.

COPY NO. 1

WAR CABINET.

RATIONING OF CLOTHING.

Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade.

1. As my colleagues are aware, supplies of raw material for civilian clothing have been drastically curtailed; the amounts of cotton and wool available are not more than about 25 per cent. of the pre-war normal. Hitherto consumers have been drawing on the large stocks held by traders and have not felt the full impact of the severe cut in supplies. Stocks are now giving out and shortages are beginning to appear. These shortages will increase rapidly, and I fear that unless either supplies are increased, or the distribution of the existing supplies is equalized (which means rationing), some part of the population will have to go short of clothing in the autumn and winter; there will be panic buying and shop queues, prices will rise and the shops will be cleared by the better-to-do, leaving yet smaller supplies or none at all for the poorer classes. I need not dwell on the social consequences of such a condition of affairs.

2. I have considered very carefully whether supplies of clothing for the civilian population could be increased sufficiently to avoid rationing, but I am convinced that it is not possible. To meet my proposed rationing scheme would require some increase in the present allocation of raw materials for civilian clothing; I revert to this in paragraph 9. To

War Cabinet memorandum on the rationing of clothing, 1941.

Catalogue ref: PREM 3/96/1

Transcript

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.
TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

MOST SECRET

W.P. (41) 105.

COPY NO. 1

WAR CABINET.

RATIONING OF CLOTHING.

Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade.

1. As my colleagues are aware, supplies of raw material for civilian clothing have been drastically curtailed; the amounts of cotton and wool available are not more than about 25 percent, of the pre-war normal. Hitherto consumers have been drawing on the large stocks held by traders and have not felt the full impact of the severe cut in supplies. Stocks are now giving out and shortages are beginning to appear. These shortages will increase rapidly, and I fear that unless either supplies are increased, or the distribution of the existing supplies is equalized (which means rationing), some part of the population will have to go short of clothing in the autumn and winter; there will be panic buying and shop queues, prices will rise and the shops will be cleared by the better-to-do, leaving yet smaller supplies or none at all for the poorer classes. I need not dwell on the social consequences of such a condition of affairs.

2. I have considered very carefully whether supplies of clothing for the civilian population could be increased sufficiently to avoid rationing, but I am convinced that it is not possible. To meet my proposed rationing scheme would require some increase in the present allocation of raw materials for civilian clothing; I revert to this in paragraph 9...

Leaflet issued by the Board of Trade, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: BT 64/3026

6-42
71



RATIONING

of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear from June 1

There is enough and to spare for all if we have *fair shares*. Rationing is the way to get fair shares. *Fair shares*—when workers are producing bombs and aeroplanes and guns instead of frocks, suits and shoes. *Fair shares*—when ships must run the gauntlet with munitions and food rather than with wool and cotton. *Fair shares*—when movements of population outrun local supplies. Rationing is not the same as shortage. Rationing, or *fair shares*, is the way to *prevent* a shortage without interfering with full war production.

So, from now on (June 1st, 1941) you will have to present coupons to buy clothing, cloth, footwear and knitting wool. At present the coupons to be used are the Margarine Coupons in your Food Ration Book. (You don't need these for margarine, and it is a great saving of paper to use this page for the clothing ration). There are 26 coupons on the margarine page. The numbers printed on them are to be ignored; each coupon counts 1 only. You will receive 40 more coupons making 66 to last you for a full year.

How much will the coupons entitle you to buy? Here are a few examples taken from the long list which will be printed in your paper to-morrow. *Watch out for this list!* A woollen dress will need 11 coupons, a man's trousers 8, a pair of socks 3, and 1 coupon will allow you to buy two handkerchiefs, or one collar, or two ounces of knitting wool. You can use your coupons on whatever you need, when you need it. You can shop anywhere without registration—the

retailer will simply cut out the necessary number of coupons for you. *It is illegal to sell or buy coupons*—for this would defeat the purpose of "fair shares."

Special cases are being looked after. Here are a few examples. Clothing for babies won't need coupons at all. Because children grow fast their clothes are rated at less coupons than grown peoples'. Mending wool, boiler suits, sanitary towels, elastic, hats, caps, and clogs are among the articles which you can buy without coupons. So are all second-hand articles. Blitzed households will be able to get special replacement coupons.

This rationing scheme is as much a surprise to your retailer as it is to you. Of course it had to be kept secret, or some people might have tried to get in first. It must take a few days to sort things out. You will lose nothing by postponing your purchase, because from to-day it is illegal, as well as against his own interest, for any retailer to sell rationed goods except against coupons.

To Retailers

This will come as a surprise to you, but you will agree that secrecy was essential. The scheme will benefit you as a trader no less than as a loyal citizen. Your replacement stocks will depend not on previous dealings with your wholesaler, but on the number of coupons you are able to turn in. Suppose your present stock is small: even so good salesmanship will turn it over fast in exchange for coupons which will secure your replacements. Of course there will be teething troubles, though the scheme has been made as simple as possible. Your Trade Organisations have agreed to answer enquiries.

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE

Leaflet issued by the Board of Trade, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: BT 64/3026

This leaflet was issued by the Board of Trade to explain to the public and retailers that the idea behind the rationing of clothing and footwear was to ensure 'fair shares' for all. It was not about shortages.

Clothes rationing was introduced in May 1941. This made sure that everyone had a fair share of what was available. Everybody was given a ration book with 66 clothing coupons that had to last for a year. Each item of clothing that was rationed was worth a certain number of coupons, for example one dress was worth eleven coupons. People still had to pay for clothes, but they had to hand over the right number of coupons each time they bought something.

Transcript

RATIONING of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear from June 1

There is enough and to spare for all if we have fair shares. Rationing is the way to get fair shares. Fair shares – when workers are producing bombs and aeroplanes and guns instead of frocks, suits and shoes. Fair shares – when ships must run the gauntlet with munitions and food rather than with wool and cotton. Fair shares – when movements of population outrun local supplies. Rationing is not the same as shortage. Rationing, or fair shares, is the way to prevent a shortage without interfering with full war production.

So, from now on (June 1st 1941) you will have to present coupons to buy clothing, cloth, footwear and knitting wool. At present the coupons to be used are the Margarine Coupons in your Food Ration Book. (You don't need these for margarine, and it is a great saving of paper to use this page for the clothing ration). There are 26 coupons on the margarine page. The numbers printed on them are to be ignored; each coupon counts 1 only. You will receive 40 more coupons making 66 to last you for a full year.

How much will the coupons entitle you to buy? Here are a few examples taken from the long list which will be printed in your paper tomorrow. Watch out for this list! A woollen dress will need 11 coupons, a man's trousers 8, a pair of socks 3, and 1 coupon will allow you to buy two handkerchiefs, or one collar, or two ounces of knitting wool. You can use your coupons on whatever you need, when you need it. You can shop anywhere without

Leaflet issued by the Board of Trade, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: BT 64/3026

registration – the retailer will simply cut out the necessary number of coupons for you. It is illegal to sell or buy coupons – for this would defeat the purpose of “fair shares.”

Special cases are being looked after. Here are a few examples. Clothing for babies won't need coupons at all. Because children grow fast their clothes are rated at less coupons than grown peoples'. Mending wool, boiler suits, sanitary towels, elastic, hats, caps, and clogs are among the articles which you can buy without coupons. So are all second-hand articles. Blitzed households will be able to get special replacement coupons.

This rationing scheme is as much a surprise to your retailer as it is to you. Of course it had to be kept secret, or some people might have tried to get in first. It must take a few days to sort things out. You will lose nothing by postponing your purchase, because from today it is illegal, as well as against his own interest, for any retailer to sell rationed goods except against coupons.

To Retailers

This will come as a surprise to you, but you will agree that secrecy was essential. The scheme will benefit you as a trader no less than as a loyal citizen. Your replacement stocks will depend not on previous dealings with your wholesaler, but on the number of coupons you are able to turn in. Suppose your present stock is small: even so good salesmanship will turn it over fast in exchange for coupons which will secure your replacements. Of course there will be teething troubles, though the scheme has been made as simple as possible. Your Trade Organisations have agreed to answer enquiries.

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE

A Ministry of Information poster entitled 'Go through your Wardrobe', 1929-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/144/1

Go through your wardrobe



A Ministry of Information poster entitled 'Go through your Wardrobe', 1929-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/144/1

The war caused a shortage of clothes and high prices for those that could be found in the shops. It was no longer possible to get supplies of clothes from abroad, and clothes manufacturers in Britain had to make things needed for the war such as uniforms and parachutes.

The 'Make do and Mend' campaign was introduced by the government to encourage people to get as much wear as possible out of the clothes they already had. Posters and information leaflets gave people advice and ideas about how to do this. Evening classes were set up to teach people how to make new clothes out of bits of worn out old ones, rather than throw them away.

Transcript

Go through your wardrobe

Make-do and mend

Results of an investigation recording attitudes towards clothes rationing, 1941. Catalogue Ref: BT 64/4101

Underwear will be worst trouble; has to change underwear every day working in heat; sparks burn vests..... 3

Shirts go quickly when taken for work; need a change each day..... 2

Wellingtons for agricultural workers should not be rationed..... 1

Sandals ideal for hot factories, but cannot spare coupons..... 1

Overalls of any type should not require coupons..... 5

Trousers for growing boys will be biggest difficulty..... 1

Shoes for children wear out so quickly; child needs new shoes once a fortnight; new shoes needed every three weeks; infants shoes cannot be mended; cannot "cut-down" shoes.... 28

Finafores and aprons or housefrocks should not be rationed; need too many coupons; are a necessity; save other clothes; better value to buy summer frock as fewer coupons; does not compare favourably with summer frock coupons..... 7

Stockings need too many coupons per pair; "go" so very quickly lately; ladder when cycling to work etc..... 15

Socks need too many coupons per pair..... 4

Winter coat needs 18 coupons, this will leave only 2 coupons to spent until December; badly needs coat (last bought 3 ys ago) but not sufficient coupons left to buy..... 4

Other Complaints and Suggestions:

Hampers the home dressmaker; to make a coat takes 20 coupons, to buy only 18..... 1

Child has to give up coupons at sewing class..... 1

All husband and wife's coupons go on children..... 2

"As usual mother will have to go without"..... 1

Results of an investigation recording attitudes towards clothes rationing, 1941. Catalogue Ref: BT 64/4101

The Government wanted to make sure everyone pulled together to help fight the war on the Home Front. The publicity produced about salvage, food and clothes rationing made it seem that everyone was willing to make sacrifices so that there was enough to go around, and that all spare resources went in to the war effort.

Those that did try and keep to the ration often found it difficult, and there were many complaints about how difficult it still was to get some types of clothes. Lots of substitute foods such as dried egg powder, and liquid paraffin instead of cooking oil, had to be used to make up for the shortages. These were not very tasty and people hated them. Housewives were advised to tell their families what had gone into their dinner only after they had eaten it!

Transcript

Underwear will be worst trouble; has to change underwear every day working in heat; sparks burn vests.....3

Shirts go quickly when taken for work; need a change each day.....2

Wellingtons for agricultural workers should not be rationed.....1

Sandals ideal for hot factories, but cannot spare coupons.....1

Overalls of any type should not require coupons.....5

...

Trousers for growing boys will be biggest difficulty.....1

Shoes for children wear out so quickly; child needs new shoes once a fortnight; new shoes needed every three weeks; infants shoes cannot be mended; cannot "cut-down" shoes.....28

...

Pinafores and aprons or housefrocks should not be rationed; need too many coupons; are a necessity; save other clothes; better value to buy summer frock as fewer coupons; does not compare favourably with summer frock coupons.....7

Results of an investigation recording attitudes towards clothes rationing, 1941. Catalogue Ref: BT 64/4101

Stockings need too many coupons per pair; "go" so very quickly lately; ladder when cycling to work etc.....15

Socks need too many coupons per pair.....4

Winter coat needs 18 coupons, this will leave only 2 coupons to spent until December; badly needs coat (last bought 3 years ago) but not sufficient coupons left to buy.....4

...

Other Complaints and Suggestions

Hampers the home dressmaker; to make a coat takes 20 coupons, to buy only 18.....1

Child has to give up coupons at sewing class.....1

All husband and wife's coupons gone on children.....2

"As usual mother will have to go without"1

Evidence of Detective Inspector Capstick used in the case of Rex v. Glazier and Leigh, 1942. Catalogue Ref: CRIM 1/1387

JOHN CAPSTICK, on oath saith :-

16th February 1942. Detective Inspector, New Scotland Yard.

At 11.30 a.m. on the 15th February, 1942, I saw the two prisoners at the Regent Palace Hotel. I heard Glazier say to another man ^{Alan} "You know how much a thousand we want for them?" The other man said "Yes, £11 he asked me." Glazier said "Yes, that's right, £10 a thousand they are, and he gets the odd £1 for introduction." Later Glazier said "We can get $\frac{1}{2}$ a million of them if you can take them". Leigh said "Come upstairs, we will do the business up there." They went by the lift to the 7th floor. I was in the lift with them and saw Leigh hand to Glazier this packet of 318 clothing coupons, Exhibit 1. They entered Room 2714 and after a moment Glazier came out, looked up and down and saw me. I said who we were and I suspected them of being in possession of clothing coupons they were not entitled to have. Glazier said "You have made a mistake, we have no coupons." McDonald and I entered room 2714 and there saw Leigh. Glazier said we were police officers looking for coupons and Leigh said "I have no coupons on me, you can search me." I began to search him and Glazier took from his pocket the packet of coupons, Exhibit 1, and this other packet, Exhibit 2. I said "Where did you get these?" Glazier said "They are ours. We are general dealers from Glasgow and down here on business." Leigh said "You will find they are straight up." They were cautioned and arrested and neither replied.

RECALLED:

23rd February 1942. They were later charged at West End Central Police Station with stealing and receiving the coupons and, after

Evidence of Detective Inspector Capstick used in the case of Rex v. Glazier and Leigh, 1942. Catalogue Ref: CRIM 1/1387

Evidence of Detective Inspector Capstick used in the case of Rex v. Glazier and Leigh, two 'spivs', convicted of illegally selling extra clothing coupons

Lots of people did try and get round rationing, buying extra clothes and food without coupons on the 'Black Market' from profiteers known as 'Spivs'. Coupons were also forged, or stolen and sold on the black market at high prices so people could get more than their ration.

Transcript

JOHN CAPSTICK, on oath saith:-

16th February 1942.

Detective Inspector, New Scotland Yard.

At 11.30 a.m. on the 15th February, 1942, I saw the two prisoners at the Regent Palace Hotel. I heard Glazier say to another man "You know how much a thousand we want for them?" The other man said "Yes, £11 he asked me." Glazier said "Yes, that's right, £10 a thousand they are, and he gets the odd £1 for introduction."

Later Glazier said "We can get half a million of them if you can take them." Leigh said "Come upstairs, we will do the business up there." They went by the lift to the 7th floor. I was in the lift with them and saw Leigh hand to Glazier this packet of 318 clothing coupons, Exhibit 1.

They entered Room Z714 and after a moment Glazier came out, looked up and down and saw me. I said who we were and I suspected them of being in possession of clothing coupons they were not entitled to have. Glazier said "You have made a mistake, we have no coupons." McDonald and I entered room Z714 and there saw Leigh. Glazier said we were police officers looking for coupons and Leigh said "I have no coupons on me, you can search me." I began to search him and Glazier took from his pocket the packet of coupons, Exhibit 1, and this other packet, Exhibit 2. I said "Where did you get these?" Glazier said "They are ours. We are general dealers from Glasgow and down here on business." Leigh said "You will find they are straight up." They were cautioned and arrested and neither replied.

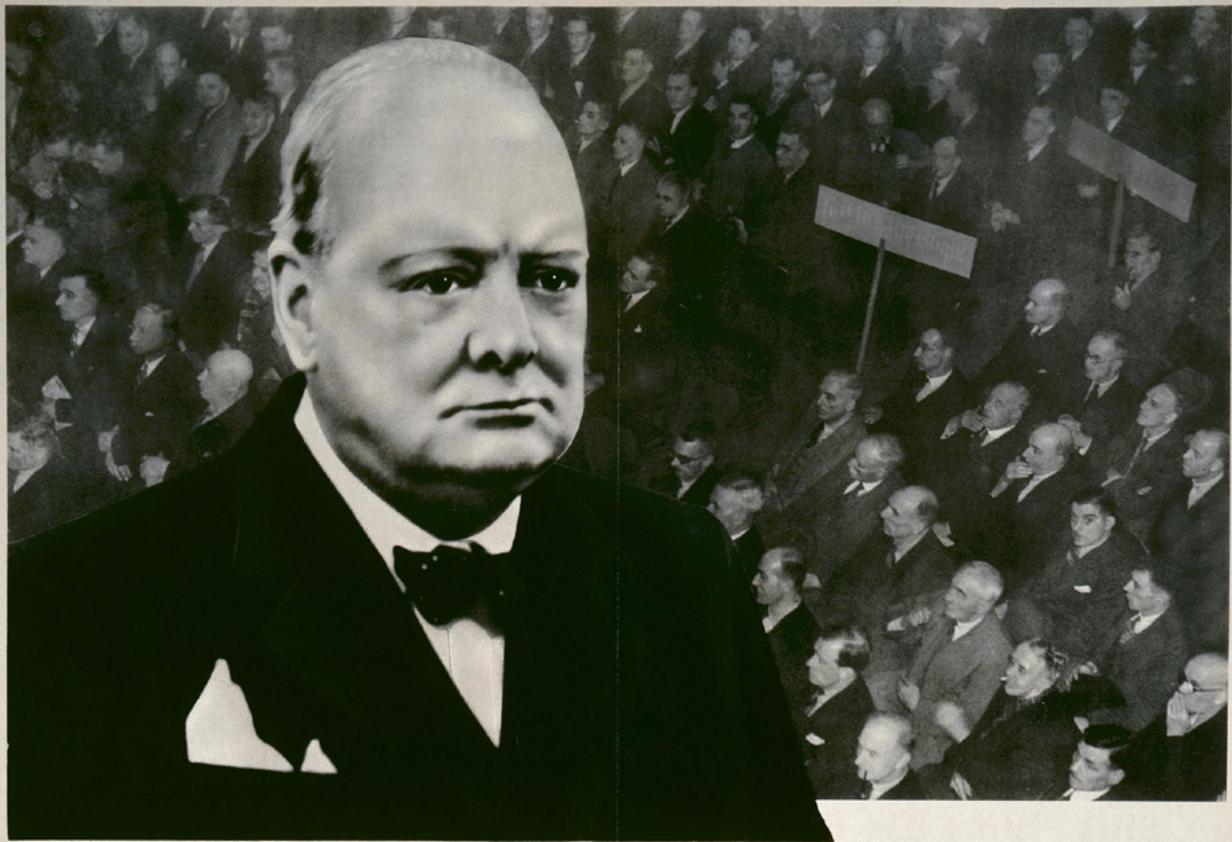
RECALLED:

23rd February 1942.

They were later charged at West End Central Police Station with stealing and receiving the coupons...

JOHN CAPSTICK, Det. Insp.

Poster from the Ministry of Fuel and Power entitled 'We cut the coal'
1942. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/146 (67)



“We shall not fail, and then some day, when children ask: What did you do to win this inheritance for us and to make our name so respected among men?” one will say: “I was a Fighter Pilot,” another will say: “I was in the Submarine Service,” another: “I marched with the Eighth Army,” a fourth will say: “None of you could have lived without the convoys and the Merchant Seamen,” and you, in your turn will say, with equal pride and with equal right: “WE CUT THE COAL.”

Winston Churchill

OCTOBER 31st, 1942

Poster from the Ministry of Fuel and Power entitled 'We cut the coal' 1942. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/146 (67)

Poster from the Ministry of Fuel and Power entitled 'We cut the coal' with a photograph of Winston Churchill and an extract from the speech given by Churchill at the Conference of Delegates of coal owners and miners, at Westminster Central Hall, 31st October 1942

Churchill's message in this poster was that miners working behind the scenes were vital to the war effort. Posters including words taken from his speeches were often used to inspire morale.

Transcript

"We shall not fail, and then some day, when children ask: What did you do to win this inheritance for us and to make our name so respected among men?" one will say: "I was a Fighter Pilot," another will say: "I was in the Submarine Service," another: "I marched with the Eighth Army," a fourth will say: "None of you could have lived without the convoys and the Merchant Seamen," and you, in your turn will say, with equal pride and with equal right: "WE CUT THE COAL."

Winston Churchill

October 31st, 1942

Poster entitled 'Watch Your Meters', 1942-1947.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/299 (31)



Poster entitled 'Watch Your Meters', 1942-1947.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/299 (31)

Poster entitled 'Watch Your Meters' part of collection of posters and pamphlets concerning fuel and power conservation.

Women in particular are encouraged to save gas and electricity as part of the war effort even if they care for babies or small children.

Transcript

A baby makes it harder but...

I am saving gas and electricity.

Switch off

Turn off

Watch your meters

Extract from a progress report on supplying different Ministry of Information posters, 1939. Catalogue Ref: INF 1/6

SUPPLY DIVISION

9.

(1) Posters

Two poster-designs are at present being posted throughout the country, viz:-

A. "Your courage your cheerfulness your resolution will bring us to victory".

B. "Freedom is in peril - Defend it with all your might".

A third design:- "Keep calm and carry on" is printed and is being held in reserve for immediate posting should the necessity arise, e.g. immediately following a severe air-raid.

Pictorial poster-designs are in hand.

Extract from a progress report on supplying different Ministry of Information posters, 1939. Catalogue Ref: INF 1/6

Extract from a progress report on supplying different Ministry of Information posters, including the famous one entitled 'Keep Calm and Carry On'.

This source gives insight into how the government planned particular propaganda poster campaigns to persuade the population to respond or behave in such a way.

Transcript

9. SUPPLY DIVISION

(1) Posters

Two poster-designs are at present being posted throughout the country, viz:-

A. "Your courage your cheerfulness your resolution will bring us to victory".

B. "Freedom is in peril – Defend it with all your might".

A third design:- "Keep calm and carry on" is printed and is being held in reserve for immediate posting should the necessity arise, e.g. immediately following a severe air-raid.

Pictorial poster-designs are in hand.

**Poster: 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:
Natural and Industrial Resources', 1943-1944. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/4**

Poster: 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Natural and Industrial Resources', 1943-1944. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/4

This poster was created to show the public how all parts of the country were contributing to the war effort in some way. It was a show of strength and unity.

Transcript

UNITED KINGDOM

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

NATURAL AND INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES

[Box showing which symbols represent which resource:]

AGRICULTURE

Moorland

Downland

Grassland

Mixed farming

Arable land

Forest

Sheep

Cattle

Grain

Fruit

Vegetables

Potatoes

Sugar beet

Fishing port

Milk

INDUSTRIES

Poster: 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Natural and Industrial Resources', 1943-1944. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/4

Cotton

Wool

Other textiles

Chemicals

Food processing

Potteries

Coal export

Smelting etc.

Iron & other minerals

Cement

Engineering

Aluminium

Granite

Ship building

Coal field

Railways

'The Land Girl' magazine, No. 1, Volume 4, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22



No. 1, Volume 4

APRIL, 1943

Price 3d.

NOW WE ARE THREE

WITH this issue the Land Girl celebrates its third birthday. The W.L.A. is now about ten times the size it was when the magazine started and it is certainly ten times as much appreciated. It plays, in fact, an important part in our national achievement of producing at home two out of every three meals we eat. That still leaves forty-seven million meals a day, however, to be brought in from overseas.

Our emotional experiences of the last three years have been very wearying. Backs to the wall and a sense of desperate urgency after Dunkirk, stolid endurance through the blitzes, anxious preparations for invasion, elation and disappointment about Libya, dismay over Malay, delight in a North African victory—and a gradual, relieved conviction that the tide had turned at last.

Three years ago our certainty that, despite all the evidence, we would win the war was founded on the failure of the man in the street to believe in the possibility of defeat. No matter what happened or what it cost, Britons never, never, never would be slaves.

Our belief in victory has much more foundation in fact now, but that carries its own danger. The Germans thought they had victory in their pocket in 1940, and that is a lesson for all who run to read. Oddly enough, it is very much more difficult when you are winning than when you are losing, to go on working your hardest, grumbling least and accepting all the inconveniences and injustices that come your way. Everyone is overtired and overworked and the Land Army in particular has won a nice comfortable bed of laurels on which it is very tempting to rest. But there can't be any rest for us until we are producing those forty-seven million meals a day which our ships now have to bring, instead of carrying men and munitions for the Second Front.

M.A.P.

'The Land Girl' magazine, No. 1, Volume 4, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22

'The Land Girl' magazine helped to prevent land girls from feeling isolated and first went on sale on 1st April 1940 for the cost of 4d. [2 pence]. It started as an unofficial Women's Land Army publication. It became very popular, selling around 21,000 a week. The Ministry of Agriculture realised its popularity and paid for its production. The extracts shown here provide some insight into the role of the Women's Land Army and how some land girls engaged with the magazine.

The Women's Land Army was set up in June 1939 and by September it had over 1,000 members. By 1941, its numbers had risen to 20,000 and, at its peak in 1943, over 80,000 women classed themselves as 'Land Girls'. Numbers did not rise after that, as women were needed to make aircraft and were encouraged to take up factory work instead.

Transcript

THE LAND GIRL

No. 1, Volume 4 APRIL, 1943 Price 3d.

NOW WE ARE THREE

With this issue the Land Girl celebrates its third birthday. The W.I.A. is now about ten times the size it was when the magazine started and it is certainly ten times as much appreciated. It plays, in fact, an important part in our national achievement of producing at home two out of every three meals we eat. That still leaves forty-seven million meals a day, however, to be brought in from overseas.

Our emotional experiences of the last three years have been very wearying. Backs to the wall and a sense of desperate urgency after Dunkirk, stolid endurance through the blitzes, anxious preparations for invasion, elation and disappointment about Libya, dismay over Malay, delight in a North African victory – and a gradual, relieved conviction that the tide had turned at last.

Three years ago our certainty that, despite all the evidence, we would win the war was founded on the failure of the man in the street to believe in the possibility of defeat. No matter what happened or what it cost, Britons never, never, never, would be slaves.

'The Land Girl' magazine, No. 1, Volume 4, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22

Our belief in victory has much more foundation in fact now, but that carries its own danger. The Germans thought they had victory in their pocket in 1940, and that is a lesson for all who run to read. Oddly enough, it is very much more difficult when you are winning than when you are losing, to go on working your hardest, grumbling least and accepting all the inconveniences and injustices that come your way. Everyone is overtired and overworked and the Land Army in particular has won a nice comfortable bed of laurels on which it is very tempting to rest. But there can't be any rest for us until we are producing those forty-seven million meals a day which our ships now have to bring, instead of carrying men and munitions for the Second Front.

M.A.P.

Poem printed in 'The Land Girl' magazine, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: DO 131/15

My Day*(With apologies to Mrs. Roosevelt and the Orderly).*

At seven o'clock on an inky morn, I
 flounder up the lane,
 To call the cows—my beautiful cows!—
 —in out of the pouring rain;
 I count them, one by deliberate one, as
 they slowly pass the gate,
 And know I shall get depressingly wet
 by the time I reach thirty-eight!

Chorus

Oh, oh, the farmer's girl! Oh, the
 farming day!
 Poor tired farmer's girl! Tra la la la
 la la la—
 Seven o'clock on a winter's morn I
 start my little day,
 And all day long I am tending cows
 in a conscientious way,
 And it's Buttercup hey! Violet hoy!
 Julia, step this way!
 It's fun to be a farmer's girl and work
 in the yard all day.
 I gaily laugh as I pack the chaff in bags
 of five foot three
 To make the pulp which they greedily
 gulp for breakfast and for tea,
 Then to and fro I steadily go, and the
 breeze is blowing free—
 Though most of it goes in the tank I
 suppose, a lot of it stocks to me!

Chorus.

I sit in the sun and consume a bun when
 the morning's half-way through,
 Then go with a rush and madly brush—
 —I've got so much to do!
 I clear the mud, and mop up the blood
 when the turnip knife misses its way,
 And walk for miles over hedges and stiles
 for cows that have gone astray.

Chorus.

Ola Trist, 37577 (Cornwall).

FOR SALE.—Brown riding boots, 5;
 worn only twice. WANTED pair size
 6 or would exchange. Write, Holder,
 Goleigh Farm, Newton Valence, Alton,
 Hants.

Poem printed in 'The Land Girl' magazine, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: DO 131/15

The Land Girl magazine helped to prevent land girls from feeling isolated and first went on sale on 1st April 1940 for the cost of 4d. [2 pence]. It started as an unofficial Women's Land Army publication. It became very popular, selling around 21,000 a week. The Ministry of Agriculture realised its popularity and paid for its production. The extracts shown here provide some insight into the role of the Women's Land Army and how some land girls engaged with the magazine.

Women joined the Land Army from all backgrounds, a third coming from London and other large cities. Farm work was hard, and the women did all sorts of jobs including hoeing, ploughing, hedging, turning hay, lifting potatoes, threshing, lambing and looking after poultry. A thousand women were employed as rat catchers. Six thousand women worked in the Timber Corps, felling trees and running sawmills. About a quarter were employed in milking and general farm work.

Transcript

My Day

(With apologies to Mrs. Roosevelt and the Orderly).

At seven o'clock on an inky morn, I flounder up the lane,
To call the cows – my beautiful cows! – in out of the pouring rain;
I count them, one by deliberate one, as they slowly pass the gate,
And know I shall get depressingly wet by the time I reach thirty-eight!

Chorus

Oh, oh, the farmer's girl! Oh, the farming day!
Poor tired farmer's girl! Tra la la la la la la –

Seven o'clock on a winter's morn I start my little day,
And all day long I am tending cows in a conscientious way,
And it's Buttercup hey! Violet hoy! Julia, step this way!
It's fun to be a farmer's girl and work in the yard all day.

Poem printed in 'The Land Girl' magazine, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: DO 131/15

I gaily laugh as I pack the chaff in bags of five foot three
To make the pulp which they greedily gulp for breakfast and for tea,
Then to and fro I steadily go, and the breeze is blowing free –
Though most of it goes in the tank I suppose, a lot of it stocks to me!

Chorus.

I sit in the sun and consume a bun when the morning's half-way through,
Then go with a rush and madly brush – I've got so much to do!
I clear the mud, and mop up the blood when the turnip knife misses its way,
And walk for miles over hedges and stiles for cows that have gone astray.

Chorus.

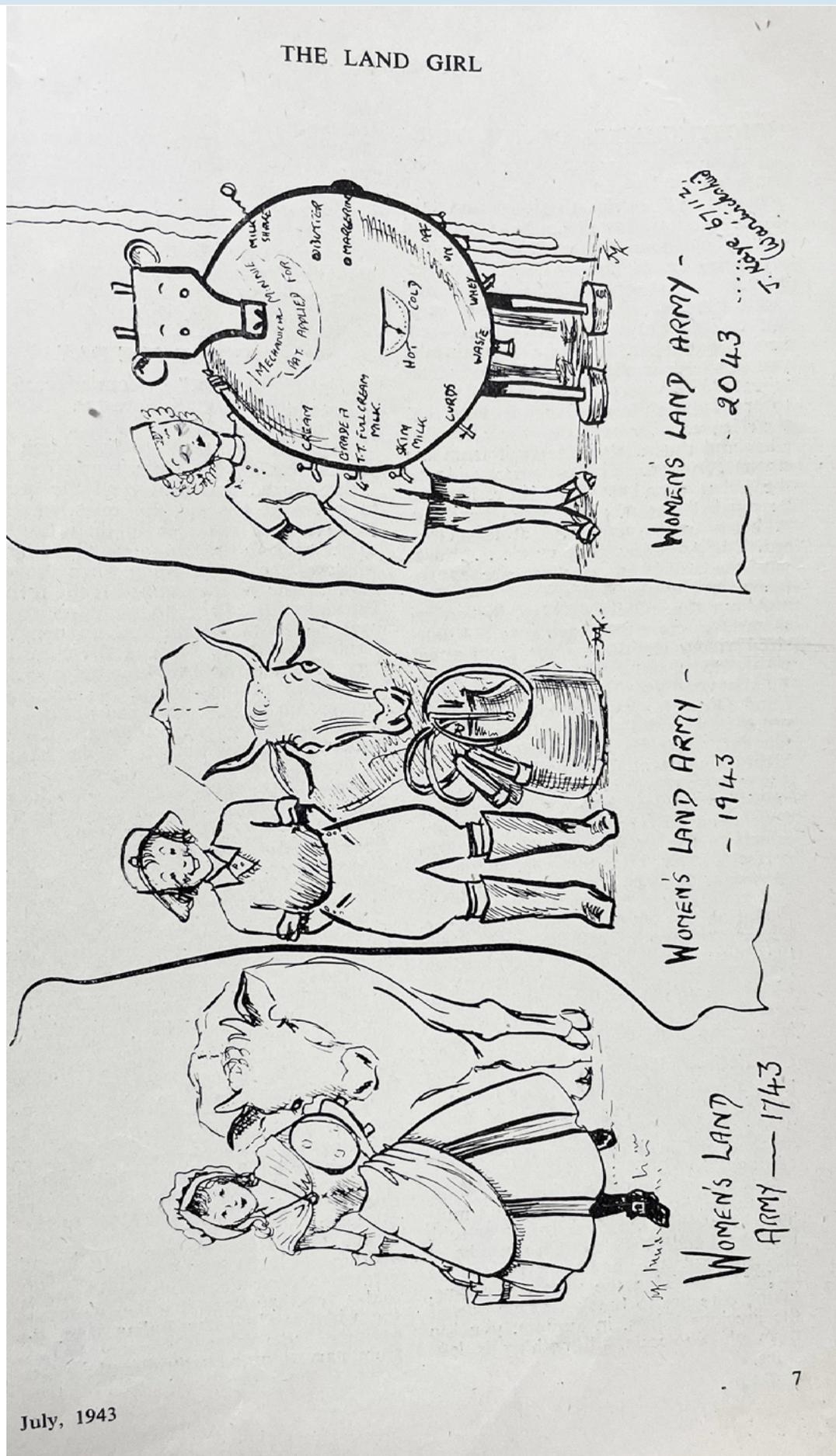
Ola Trist, 37577 (Cornwall)

–

FOR SALE. – Brown riding boots, 5; worn only twice. WANTED pair size 6 or would exchange.
Write, Holder, Goleigh Farm, Newton Valence, Alton, Hants.

Cartoon published in 'The Land Girl' magazine, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22



Cartoon published in 'The Land Girl' magazine, April 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22

The Land Girl magazine helped to prevent land girls from feeling isolated and first went on sale on 1st April 1940 for the cost of 4d. [2 pence]. It started as an unofficial Women's Land Army publication. It became very popular, selling around 21,000 a week. The Ministry of Agriculture realised its popularity and paid for its production. The extracts shown here provide some insight into the role of the Women's Land Army and how some land girls engaged with the magazine.

Transcript

[Illustration of woman in a long dress carrying a wooden stool and bucket next to a cow]:

Women's Land Army — 1743

[Illustration of woman in pants and a shirt next to a cow and an automatic milking machine]:

Women's Land Army — 1943

[Illustration of woman in a short dress next to a cow-shaped machine with different taps for different types of dairy products]:

Women's Land Army — 2043

Recruiting poster for the Women's Land Army, 1939-1945.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/140/19

'We could do with thousands more like you..'

**JOIN THE
WOMEN'S LAND
ARMY**

Apply to NEAREST W-L-A COUNTY OFFICE or to W-L-A HEADQUARTERS 6, CHESHAM STREET, LONDON S.W.1

Issued by the Ministry of Labour and National Service in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture.
PRINTED FOR H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE BY FOSH & CROSS LTD., LONDON E.C.2E.

Recruiting poster for the Women's Land Army, 1939-1945.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/140/19

The Women's Land Army was a British civilian organisation created in 1917 during the First World War so women could work in agriculture. It was revived in 1939 to recruit women to work on the land. The Women's Land Army had a uniform – green jerseys, brown breeches, brown felt hats and khaki overcoats. However, the Land Army was not a military force and many women did not wear the uniform. Some women lived in hostels but most lived on individual farms. Conditions were often poor and pay was low but many women enjoyed the work. The Women's Land Army remained in existence until 1950.

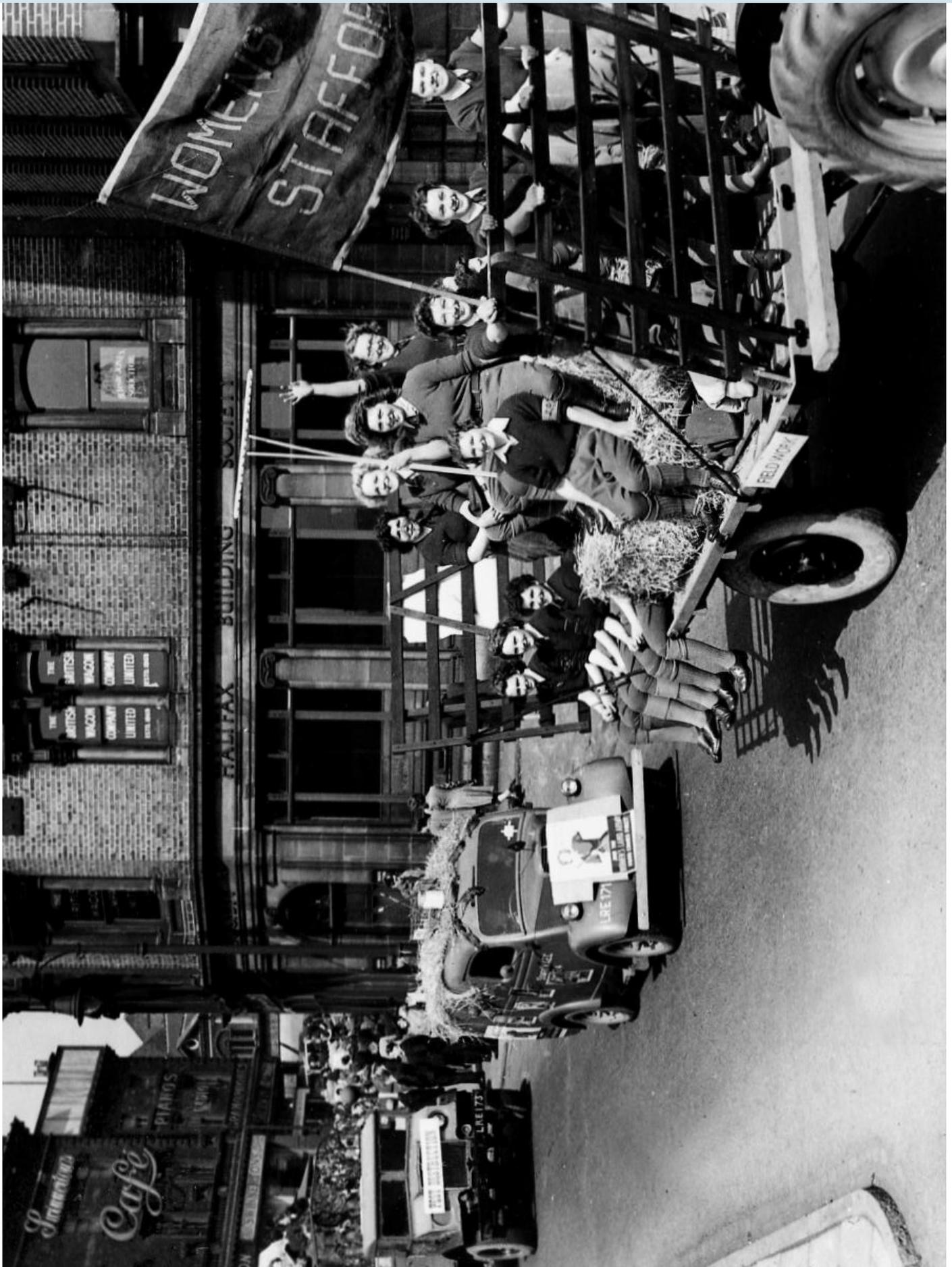
Transcript

'We could do with thousands more like you..'

JOIN THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

Apply to nearest W.L.A County Office or to W.L.A Headquarters 6, Chesham Street, London S.W.1

Women's Land Army parade in Staffordshire, probably taken during V.E. celebrations near end of the war. Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/146



Photograph from 'The Land girl' magazine entitled 'Gathering cabbages in Essex', 1944. Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22

THE LAND GIRL



*Gathering cabbages in Essex
By courtesy Southend and County Pictorial.*

Photograph from 'The Land girl' magazine entitled 'Gathering cabbages in Essex', 1944. Catalogue Ref: MAF 59/22

Transcript

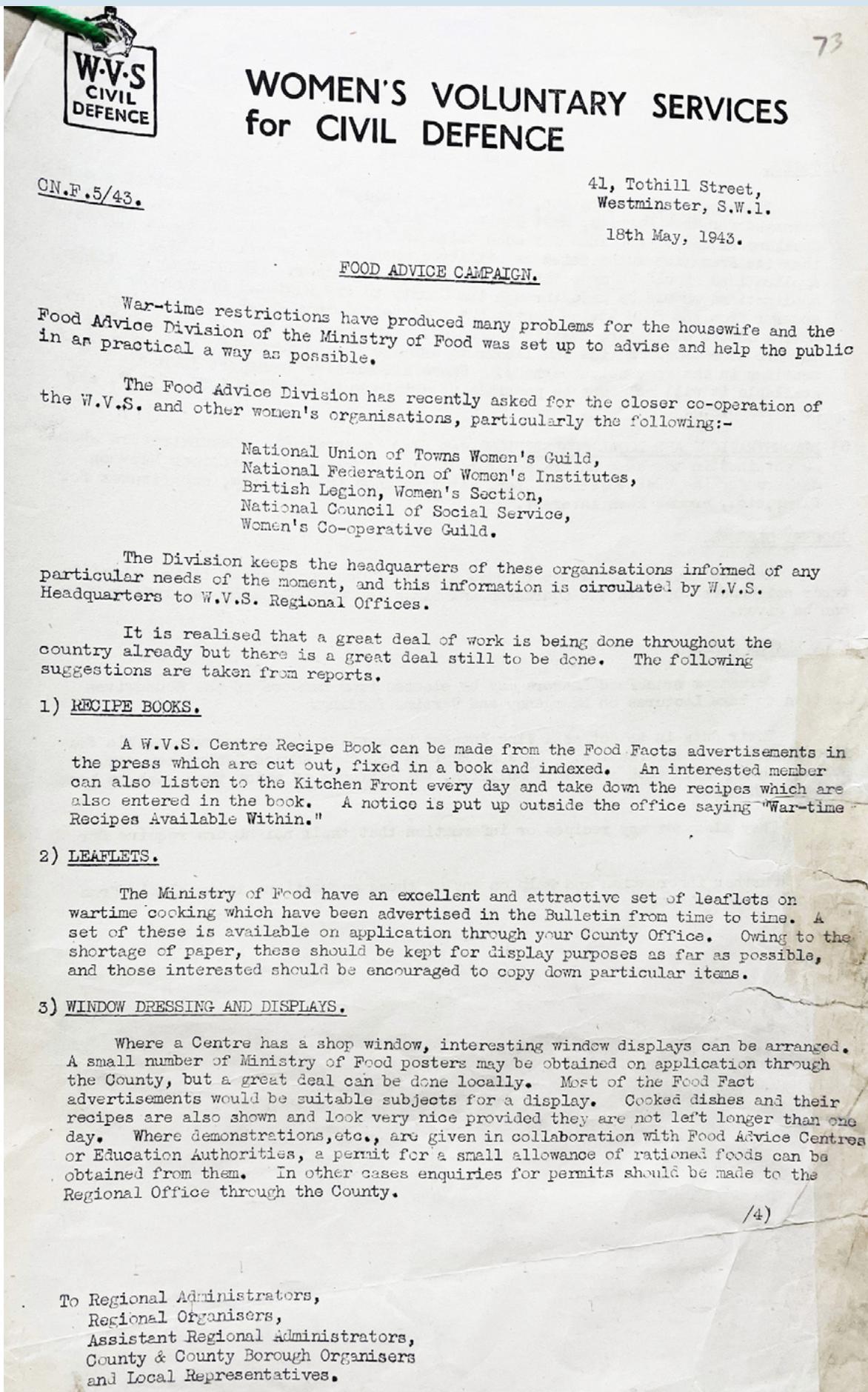
THE LAND GIRL

Gathering cabbages in Essex

By courtesy Southend and County Pictorial

Advice from the Women's Voluntary Services, 18 May 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 102/11



Advice from the Women's Voluntary Services, 18 May 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 102/11

Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence (WVS) was initially formed to help recruit women into civil defence to help civilians during and after air raids and with the evacuation and billeting of children [see Catalogue ref: INF 13/171.] By 1943, the organisation had over 1 million volunteers. These women played a vital role in wartime life. This source shows their importance in the organisation of the government's wartime food campaign and the support they provided on the Home front.

The WVS ran field kitchens and rest centres for people made homeless by bombing; provided canteens at railway stations for soldiers and sailors; escorted children being evacuated; running clothing centres for those who had lost all their possessions; operating car pools once petrol rationing was introduced; helping people salvage their personal belongings from bombed-out houses; and doing domestic work in hospitals and clinics.

The women who joined the WVS were those with domestic responsibilities, such as looking after children or relatives, who could not join the armed forces or the Land Army, or work in a factory. Only the organisers received any payment, everybody else gave their services free. The women of the WVS even had to buy their own uniform.

Transcript

Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence

41, Tothill Street,
Westminster, S.W. 1.
18th May, 1943.

FOOD ADVICE CAMPAIGN

War-time restrictions have produced many problems for the housewife and the Food Advice Division of the Ministry of Food was set up to advise and help the public in as practical a way as possible.

The Food Advice Division has recently asked for the closer co-operation of the W.V.S. and other women's organisations, particularly the following:-

Advice from the Women's Voluntary Services, 18 May 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 102/11

National Union of Towns Women's Guild,
National Federation of Women's Institutes,
British Legion, Women's Section,
National Council of Social Service,
Women's Co-operative Guild.

The Division keeps the headquarters of these organisations informed of any particular needs of the moment, and this information is circulated by W.V.S. Headquarters to W.V.S. Regional Offices.

It is realised that a great deal of work is being done throughout the country already but there is a great deal still to be done. The following suggestions are taken from reports.

1) RECIPE BOOKS.

A W.V.S. Centre Recipe Book can be made from the Food Facts advertisements in the press which are cut out, fixed in a book and indexed. An interested member can also listen to the Kitchen Front every day and take down the recipes which are also entered in the book. A notice is put up outside the office saying "War-time Recipes Available Within."

2) LEAFLETS.

The Ministry of Food have an excellent and attractive set of leaflets on wartime cooking which have been advertised in the Bulletin from time to time. A set of these is available on application through your County Office. Owing to the shortage of paper, these should be kept for display purposes as far as possible, and those interested should be encouraged to copy down particular items.

3) WINDOW DRESSING AND DISPLAYS.

Where a Centre has a shop window, interesting window displays can be arranged. A small number of Ministry of Food posters may be obtained on application through the County, but a great deal can be done locally. Most of the Food Fact advertisements would be suitable subjects for a display. Cooked dishes and their recipes are also shown and look

Advice from the Women's Voluntary Services, 18 May 1943.

Catalogue Ref: MAF 102/11

very nice provided they are not left longer than one day. Where demonstrations, etc., are given in collaboration with Food Advice Centres or Education Authorities, a permit for a small allowance of rationed foods can be obtained from them. In other cases enquiries for permits should be made to the Regional Office through the County.

To Regional Administrators,
Regional Organisers,
Assistant Regional Administrators,
County and County Borough Organisers
and Local Representatives.

Poster entitled 'Just a good afternoon's work!' 1939-1946.

Catalogue Ref: INF 3/400



Poster entitled 'Just a good afternoon's work!' 1939-1946.

Catalogue Ref: INF 3/400

This poster was part of a drive to recruit more women into local factories as part time workers. The poster suggests they can work around their own domestic duties at home. Working in this way would still help to defeat Hitler.

Many women had never worked before and had to learn to cope with very long working hours and night shifts. Some had to make long journeys to and from work. The work could also be dangerous. As well as the risk of enemy bombing raids upon factories, accidents were common, especially in the explosive industry. Another problem women had to face was the attitude of other workers and the employers. Many men did not like working with women and most women were paid less than men – often only half – for doing the same work.

Transcript

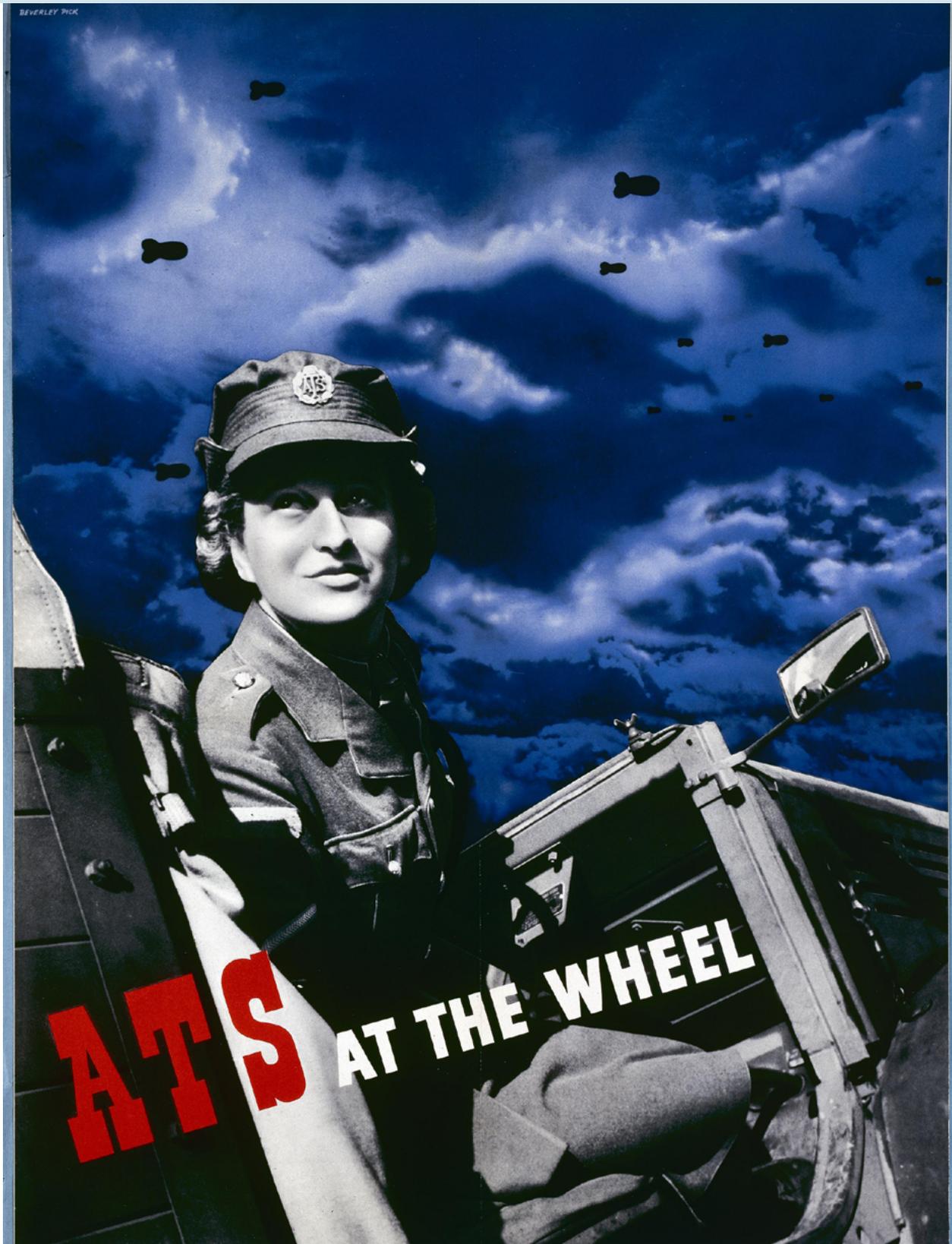
Just a good afternoon's work

[On woman's dress:]

PART-TIME WAR WORKER

Army recruitment poster entitled 'ATS at the wheel', 1939-1945.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/42/8



Ceaselessly new vehicles roll off the production lines.
Army units await them, the ATS deliver them

Army recruitment poster entitled 'ATS at the wheel', 1939-1945.

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/42/8

This government poster encouraged women to join the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service). It uses a play on words 'ATS at the wheel', meaning women carried out many roles in the war, but they also acted as drivers for the army.

Transcript

ATS AT THE WHEEL.

Ceaselessly new vehicles roll off the production lines. Army units await them, the ATS deliver them.

Public information poster encouraging women to work in factories to contribute to the war effort, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/403



Public information poster encouraging women to work in factories to contribute to the war effort, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/403

Although women had worked in factories before, there was a big increase after war broke out in 1939. As men were called-up to join the Armed Forces more and more women were needed to replace them. Women could not do the heaviest lifting jobs that still needed the greater physical strength of men and they were not sent to work in the mines but they soon proved that they could do almost any job usually undertaken by a man, and do it as well, if not better.

Transcript

WOMEN OF BRITAIN

COME INTO THE FACTORIES

ASK AT ANY EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR ADVICE AND FULL DETAILS

Ministry of Information poster with a photograph showing women at work in a factory making guns, 1942-1943. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/8



This photograph was taken during the final assembly stages in a British ordnance factory which is turning out large numbers of guns. In Britain's Royal Ordnance Factories, 60% of the employees are women, 32½% semi-skilled or unskilled men, and only 7½% skilled men. In the newest Royal Ordnance Factory, now engaged in making 6-pounder guns, women form 80% of the labour on the production side. A great proportion of these women had never been in a factory two years ago. Now they are working fifty-six hours a week at the machines. They are doing skilled men's jobs and doing them well.

BRITISH GUNS: No. 1

THE WOMEN BEHIND THE GUNS



FOR VICTORY

Ministry of Information poster with a photograph showing women at work in a factory making guns, 1942-1943. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/8

Women did all kinds of work. Over half the workforce in the chemical and explosive industry was made up of women; 1½ million worked in the engineering and metal industries. Women made shells and bombs, electrical cable and wire, uniforms, clothing, barrage balloons, tents, parachutes and flying suits. Many became skilled welders. Others played a crucial role in aircraft production. Altogether, about 7 million women were employed in the war effort.

Transcript

BRITISH GUNS: No. 1

THE WOMEN BEHIND THE GUNS

This photograph was taken during the final assembly stages in a British ordnance factory which is turning out large numbers of guns. In Britain's Royal Ordnance Factories, 60% of the employees are women, 32.5% semi-skilled or unskilled men, and only 7.5% skilled men. In the newest Royal Ordnance Factory, now engaged in making 6-pounder guns, women form 80% of the labour on the production side. A great proportion of these women had never been in a factory two years ago. Now they are working fifty-six hours a week at the machines. They are doing skilled men's jobs and doing them well.

Photograph showing two women war workers on the railways, 1942.

Catalogue Ref: RAIL 1057/3280(c)



Photograph showing two women war workers on the railways, 1942.

Catalogue Ref: RAIL 1057/3280(c)

By December 1939, 43,000 women had volunteered for active duty in the Women's Auxiliary Services of the Army, Navy and Air Force. They were not allowed to fight but did work that supported the efforts of the soldiers, sailors and airmen. At first this included typing, cooking, cleaning, driving and operating telephone switchboards but they were soon given more military work to do, such as identifying enemy aircraft, plotting air and shipping movements on battle maps, and acting as motorcycle messengers.

Photograph showing two women working on a steam locomotive, 1942. Catalogue Ref: RAIL 1057/3280



Photograph showing two women working on a steam locomotive, 1942. Catalogue Ref: RAIL 1057/3280

The government wanted women to join the Women's Auxiliary Services of the Army, Navy and Air Force so they could take the places of men who could then be sent off to fight. As a result, in 1941 they introduced conscription for all single women aged between 20 and 30. Women had to choose whether they wanted to join the armed forces or work in vital industries. Early in 1942, women aged 19 were also called up. By January 1942, over 213,000 were serving in the Auxiliary Services. The number of women entering the services fell slightly in 1943 as more people were needed to work in aircraft production but by June 1944 over 450,000 women were serving in the armed forces (the equivalent number of men was 4 ½ million).

Women were given other dangerous work to do, such as crewing anti-aircraft guns and searchlights.

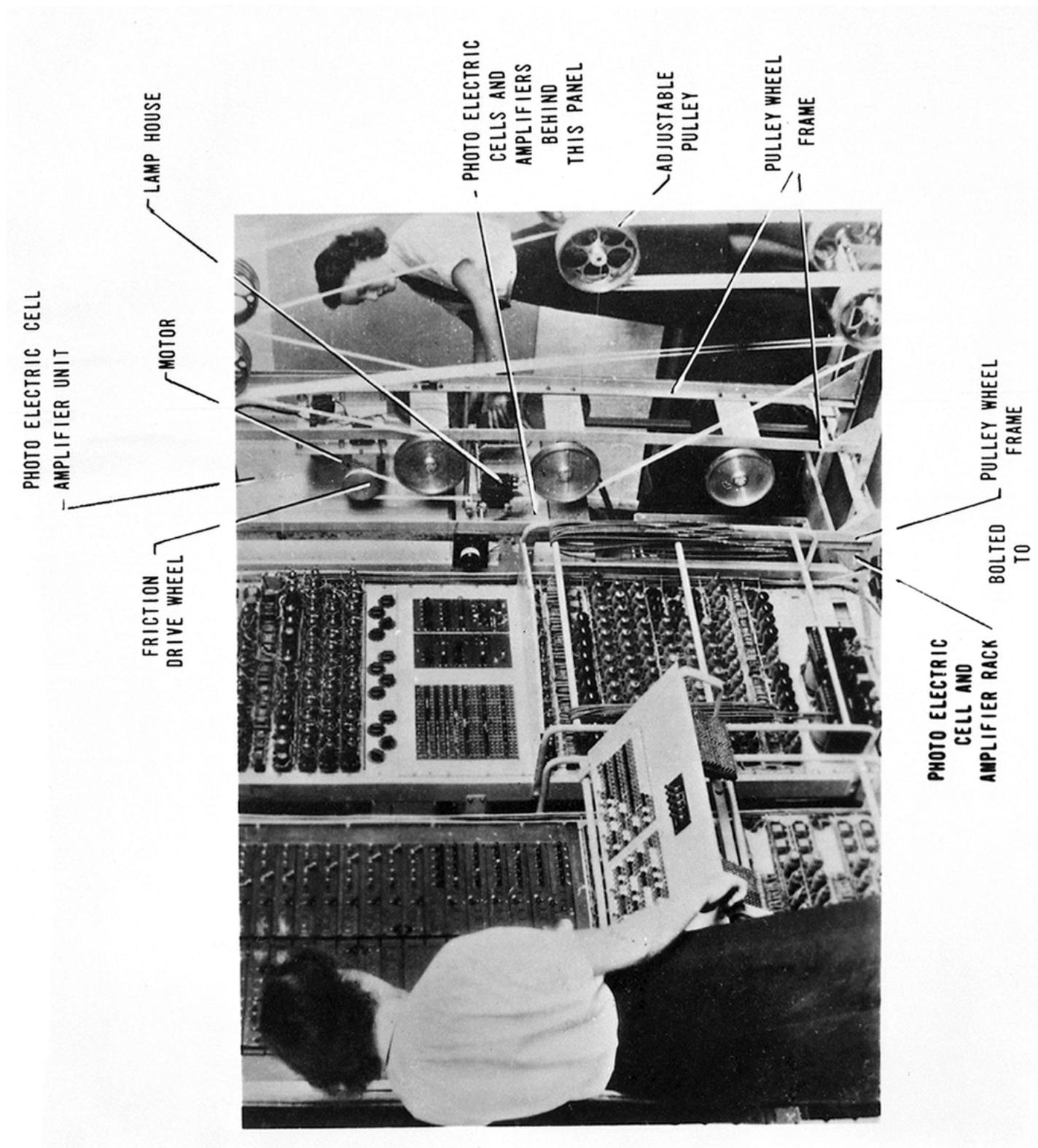
Women in engineering flight gang refuelling and checking and aircraft, 1942. Catalogue Ref: LAB 44/252



'Spotters' in the ATS (Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service) looking out for enemy aircraft, 1942. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/42/476



Annotated photograph showing women working with the Colossus (a prototype computer) at Bletchley Park, 1943. Catalogue Ref: FO 850/234



Annotated photograph showing women working with the Colossus (a prototype computer) at Bletchley Park, 1943. Catalogue Ref: FO 850/234

Women undertook top-secret work using radar or code-breaking enemy messages. Indeed, most of the 5,000 people working at Bletchley Park using early computers and captured enemy encoding machines to read German and Japanese messages were women.

Bletchley Park was the home of the British codebreaking operation during Second World War and was the birthplace of modern computing. Here Alan Turing and other agents of the 'Ultra' intelligence project decoded the enemy's secret messages. Experts have said that their work probably shortened the war by two years.

Transcript of captions

Friction drive wheel

Photo electric cell amplifier unit

Motor

Lamp house

Photo electric cells and amplifiers behind this panel

Adjustable pulley

Pulley wheel frame

Photo electric cell and amplifier rack bolted to pulley wheel frame

Extract from a Government broadcast on how to make the work of secret agents more difficult, 1940-1943. Catalogue Ref: HO 45/25595

However successful our intelligence services and police may be in detecting enemy agents, we must never rely on the dangerous assumption that this menace has been completely eradicated from our midst. Modern methods of transport - the aeroplane, the submarine and the speed boat - and modern methods of communication, such as wireless, all facilitate the work of the spy. While we have been glad to welcome to our country many thousands of genuine refugees from Nazi oppression, the presence of so many foreign subjects in our midst can only make the detection of the spy more difficult. Whereas an English accent, heard in the streets of Berlin might immediately betray the presence of a British agent, a foreign tongue spoken in Britain today does not even call for comment. It is therefore a most important duty for all of us to make the work of the enemy spy, who may be present in this country, as difficult as possible. We can do this quite easily if we make it an absolute rule never to discuss any subject, likely to be of interest to the enemy, in a public place.

Do you home discuss such subjects in the bus, in your club, or on your way home in the train. You may look round quickly, and say to yourself - Oh, its alright, we're all friends here. Or you may say - Well, there's no harm in talking about that here, because everybody here knows about it.

But are you quite sure there is no stranger present? Are you sure that of all the people round you, there is not one man who might be an enemy agent and ignorant of the things you are discussing. In a few hours, he may be sending this information back to the enemy, causing inestimable damage, and maybe the loss of valuable lives and property. Do not think for a moment that the enemy is only interested in what appears to you to be highly secret and important information. The main work of all intelligence services is piecing together scraps of information - perhaps from hundreds of sources - the net result of which may be the disclosure of vital operational information.

Extract from a Government broadcast on how to make the work of secret agents more difficult, 1940-1943. Catalogue Ref: HO 45/25595

When war broke out, many people became very concerned that the country would be full of German spies. This belief was strengthened when the government decided to intern large numbers of Germans and Austrians (See [Part 1 collection](#)). It appeared that secret agents could be anywhere. The government was also worried by the possible presence of a Fifth Column (people working or spying for the enemy) in the country. As a result, the department responsible for propaganda, the Ministry of Information, began a campaign called 'Careless Talk Costs Lives'. We have included some of its posters in this collection.

Transcript

However successful our intelligence services and police may be in detecting enemy agents, we must never rely on the dangerous assumption that this menace has been completely eradicated from our midst. Modern methods of transport – the aeroplane, the submarine and the speed boat – and modern methods of communication, such as wireless, all facilitate the work of the spy. While we have been glad to welcome to our country many thousands of genuine refugees from Nazi oppression, the presence of so many foreign subjects in our midst can only make the detection of the spy more difficult. Whereas an English accent, heard in the streets of Berlin might immediately betray the presence of a British agent, a foreign tongue spoken in Britain today does not even call for comment. It is therefore a most important duty for all of us to make the work of the enemy spy, who may be present in this country, as difficult as possible. We can do this quite easily if we make it an absolute rule never to discuss any subject, likely to be of interest to the enemy, in a public place.

...

Do you discuss such subjects in the bus, in your club, or on your way home in the train. You may look round quickly, and say to yourself – Oh, its alright, we're all friends here. Or you may say – Well, there's no harm in talking about that here, because everybody here knows about it.

But are you quite sure there is no stranger present? Are you sure that of all the people round you, there is not one man who might be an enemy agent and ignorant of the things you are discussing. In a few hours, he may be sending this information back to the enemy, causing inestimable damage, and maybe the loss of valuable lives and property. Do not think for a moment that the enemy is only interested in what appears to you to be highly secret and important information. The main work of all intelligence services is piecing together scraps of information – perhaps from hundreds of sources – the net result of which may be the disclosure of vital operational information.

Original artwork for a poster to be used in the 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' campaign 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/232



You never know who's on the wires!

**BE CAREFUL
WHAT YOU SAY**

Original artwork for a poster to be used in the 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' campaign 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 3/232

The government was also worried by the possible presence of a Fifth Column (people working or spying for the enemy) in the country. As a result, the department responsible for propaganda, the Ministry of Information, began a campaign called 'Careless Talk Costs Lives'.

Many of the posters used in the campaign were designed to be funny. Some showed people having conversations on the bus or in cafés with Hitler listening in the background. Others used cartoon characters such as Popeye to get the message across. The funny nature of the posters helped people to understand their message.

The 'Careless Talk Cost Lives' campaign was very successful. It worked because people found the message easy to understand and liked the fact that the posters were funny.

Transcript

You never know who's on the wires!

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY

A poster using the 'Keep Mum, she's not so dumb!' slogan, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/217/20



A poster using the 'Keep Mum, she's not so dumb!' slogan, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/217/20

A famous slogan used on public information posters was 'Keep Mum – she's not so dumb'. It encouraged people not to gossip or talk about the war effort in case their conversations were overheard by spies. The 'Careless Talk Cost Lives' campaign was very successful. It worked because people found the message easy to follow.

Transcript

Keep mum, she's not so dumb!

CARELESS TALK COSTS LIVES

Poster: 'Don't forget that walls have ears' by Fougasse, for 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' campaign, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/217/28



Poster: 'Don't forget that walls have ears' by Fougasse, for 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' campaign, 1939-1946. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/217/28

Transcript

Don't forget that walls have ears!

CARELESS TALK COSTS LIVES

Extract from the MI5 account of the capture of Karel Richter, 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

KAREL RICHTER.

M.I.5. REPORT.

On the 14th May, 1941, at about 10.20 p.m., War Reserve Police Constable A. J. Scott of the Hertfordshire County Constabulary was on duty on the North Orbital Road near the Roundabout, London Colney. He saw two lorry drivers standing on the footpath on the South side of the road. Their lorry was just opposite, and a man who was later found to be RICHTER was standing some ten yards away. The lorry drivers asked the Constable the way to the North, saying that they had already asked the man nearby but that he appeared to be a foreigner and wanted to go to hospital. The Constable directed the lorry drivers on their way. He did not obtain the number of the lorry or the names of the drivers, and thus it has not been possible to trace these two men. He then spoke to RICHTER, asking him where he was going. RICHTER said that he was going to Cambridge but that he felt ill, could go no further and wished to go to hospital. The Constable asked for his identity card and RICHTER produced an identity card in the name of SNYDER of 14 Duckett Street, E.1. RICHTER further said that he had just come from Ipswich and had been given a lift on a motor lorry.

Constable Scott informed Sergeant Palmer of St. Albans by telephone and remained with RICHTER until shortly afterwards Sergeant Palmer arrived on the spot. The Sergeant put certain questions to RICHTER, in the course of which RICHTER said that he had been to Cromer, Norwich, Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds, and wished to return to Cambridge. Sergeant Palmer decided to take RICHTER to Fleetville Police Station, and on arrival there RICHTER produced a Czech passport. There was no endorsement upon it showing where RICHTER had landed in the United Kingdom. He was searched and upon him was found:-

£51.10. 0. in English notes,
1,400 American dollars,
and some Dutch notes and coins.

He had with him also a ration book, a compass, and a portion of a map of East Anglia.

Extract from the MI5 account of the capture of Karel Richter, 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

Karel Richter was a 29 year old Sudeten German who was caught and executed in 1941 for being a spy. He had parachuted into England on 12 May 1941 and was captured just two days later after hiding out in a field. It was his first mission.

Richter became a spy after trying to escape from Germany. He was deported from Sweden because he did not have the right papers. When he arrived back in Germany he was sent to a concentration camp. Richter was then offered his freedom if he agreed to become a spy.

Transcript

KAREL RICHTER.

M.I.5. R E P O R T.

On the 14th May, 1941, at about 10.20 p.m, War Reserve Police constable A. J. Scott of the Hertfordshire County Constabulary was on duty on the North Orbital Road near the Roundabout, London Colney.

He saw two lorry drivers standing on the footpath on the South side of the road. Their lorry was just opposite, and a man who was later found to be RICHTER was standing some ten yards away. The lorry drivers asked the Constable the way to the North, saying that they had already asked the man nearby but that he appeared to be a foreigner and wanted to go to hospital. The Constable directed the lorry drivers on their way. He did not obtain the number of the lorry or the names of the drivers, and thus it has not been possible to trace these two men. He then spoke to RICHTER, asking him where he was going. RICHTER said that he was going to Cambridge but that he felt ill, could go no further and wished to go to hospital. The Constable asked for his identity card and RICHTER produced an identity card in the name of SNYDER of 14 Duckett Street, E.1. RICHTER further said that he had just come from Ipswich and had been given a lift on a motor lorry.

Constable Scott informed Sergeant Palmer of St. Albans by telephone and remained with RICHTER until shortly afterwards Sergeant Palmer arrived on the spot. The Sergeant put certain questions to RICHTER, in the course of which RICHTER said that he had been to Cromer, Norwich, Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds, and wished to return to Cambridge. Sergeant Palmer decided to take RICHTER to Fleetville Police Station, and on arrival there RICHTER produced a Czech passport. There was no endorsement upon it showing where RICHTER had landed in the United Kingdom. He was searched and upon him was found:-

£551.10. 0. In English notes, 1,400 American dollars, and some Dutch notes and coins. He had with him also a ration book, a compass, and a portion of a map of East Anglia.

Extract from the case file on Karel Richter, 1941-1942.

Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

RICHTER proved one of the most obstinate persons under interrogation that we have so far dealt with at Letchmere House. He was a truculent and stubborn trained agent. The fact, however, that we had obtained previous information from JAKOBS shook his confidence, and when finally he was confronted by JAKOBS - who had been carefully trained for the part - this resulted in a 'break'. It is of passing interest that he was interrogated for seventeen hours before he finally confessed where he had hidden his parachute and apparatus. He was immediately taken under escort by the officers of this establishment to the scene of his arrival, and the following articles, all of which he had hidden before approaching Constable Scott, were retrieved:-

1. Black leather camera case, 8" x 5" x 2", containing wireless parts; similar zip-fastening case with the under-mentioned wireless parts:-
 - (a) Crystal to be handed to another German agent (known to M.I.5.)
 - (b) Wireless equipment capable of adapting a Mains receiving set, enabling messages to be sent to Germany.
 - (c) An adaptor which will enable this equipment to be utilised with normal high-tension batteries, should it be impossible to obtain a Mains receiving set.
2. Parachute-holder and harness.
3. Camouflaged parachute.
4. Steel helmet and flying overalls.
5. Loaded automatic pistol, Browning pattern (Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre Herstal-Belgique No. 43098).
6. Empty knife sheath (knife not yet traced).
7. Parcel with large salami sausage, cut in half; brown bread; sausage meat and paste sandwiches.
8. Hand trowel.
9. Torch.

Extract from the case file on Karel Richter, 1941-1942.

Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

Richter's first mission was to pass some equipment to another spy in England, check if this spy was really a double agent and then gather information on roads and railways, use of gas masks and National Identity Cards. After hiding for two days without food, Richter felt very ill and decided to find help. He wandered on to a busy road where two lorry drivers spotted him. The lorry drivers later reported him to a policeman who took him to the station for questioning. Richter was found to be carrying forged documents and other suspicious items so the police handed him over to the Security Service. After many hours of questioning, when confronted by another German spy [Jakobs], Richter admitted that he was a German spy and gave the Security Service full details of his mission.

A search was also made of the field where he landed and other items such as a radio transmitter, torch and automatic pistol were found. Richter was tried in October and November 1941 and was executed on 10th December.

Transcript

RICHTER proved one of the most obstinate persons under interrogation that we have so far dealt with at Latchmere House.

He was a truculent and stubborn trained agent. The fact, however, that we had obtained previous information from JAKOBS shook his confidence, and when finally he was confronted by JAKOBS – who had been carefully trained for the part – this resulted in a 'break'.

It is of passing interest that he was interrogated for seventeen hours before he finally confessed where he had hidden his parachute and apparatus. He was immediately taken under escort by the officers of this establishment to the scene of his arrival, and the following articles, all of which he had hidden before approaching Constable Scott, were retrieved:-

1. Black leather camera case, 8" x 3" x 2", containing wireless parts; similar zip-fastening case with the under-mentioned wireless parts:-
 - (a) Crystal to be handed to another German agent (known to M.I.5)
 - (b) Wireless equipment capable of adapting a Mains receiving set, enabling messages to be sent to Germany.
 - (c) An adaptor which will enable this equipment to be utilised with normal high-tension batteries, should it be impossible to obtain a Mains receiving set.

Extract from the case file on Karel Richter, 1941-1942.

Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

2. Parachute-holder and harness.
3. Camouflaged parachute.
4. Steel helmet and flying overalls.
5. Loaded automatic pistol, Browning pattern
(Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre Herstal- Belgique No. 42098).
6. Empty knife sheath (knife not yet traced).
7. Parcel with large salami sausage, cut in half; brown bread; sausage meat and paste sandwiches.
8. Hand trowel.
9. Torch

Search of field for equipment buried by Karel Richter before his capture, 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32



Extract from a report giving details of Karel Richter's mission 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

- 5 -

INSTRUCTIONS:(a) Principal Assignment.

The principle purpose of RICHTER's mission was to deliver funds and a spare wireless crystal to another German agent in this country whom he was instructed to contact. An elaborate procedure had been arranged whereby RICHTER was to identify this agent and, if the initial rendezvous miscarried, a series of alternatives were arranged. RICHTER also states that he was intended to discover whether this agent was under control and whether the messages which he was sending were authentic.

(b) Code:

RICHTER was given a code which in the absence of directions for constant variation would have been reasonably easy to break. There is no evidence that he had any system for varying the code.

(c) Money:

The Germans are apparently troubled at the possibility that we may change the numbers or colours of the current £1 and 10s notes. They consequently provided RICHTER with \$1,400 with instructions that he was to bury the dollar notes near the place where he landed. If he had difficulty in changing the English notes he was to retrieve the dollars and change them in small amounts at the ports, but not to attempt to change them in large cities or banks.

(d) Secret Ink:

RICHTER was instructed in the use of tablets dissolved in alcohol for the purpose of secret writing. He did not bring any tablets with him, but said that he had been told to purchase an article sold in England under the name of which would dissolve in water and provide a secret ink. He was given detailed instructions as to how to write his message, and was supplied with a cover address in Sweden to which he could send letters if in difficulty. is in fact and is apparently obtainable at any chemist's shop on signing the poison book. It is the equivalent of

(e) Questionnaire:

RICHTER was instructed to give information on the following points in his first investigations:-

- (i) What was the road like, or what were roads in general like - under strict, or not strict control?
- (ii) What was the control at the railway station like?
- (iii) Was it necessary to show one's Identity Card?
- (iv) Is it necessary to show this card when spending a night at an hotel?
- (v) Are gas masks carried in England, and how?
- (vi) Are they carried generally or only on journeys?

He was expected to send written reports as frequently as possible and also information on the general conditions in the district in which he found himself.

COMMENTS:

It is to be observed that in RICHTER's case the Germans have once more

This is a copy
Original document
retained in
Department
Under Section
3(4) Public
Record Act 1958

Extract from a report giving details of Karel Richter's mission 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

Richter's first mission was to pass some equipment to another spy in England, check if this spy was really a double agent and then gather information on roads and railways, use of gas masks and National Identity Cards. After hiding for two days without food, Richter felt very ill and decided to find help. He wandered on to a busy road where two lorry drivers spotted him. The lorry drivers later reported him to a policeman who took him to the station for questioning. Richter was found to be carrying forged documents and other suspicious items so the police handed him over to the Security Service. After many hours of questioning, when confronted by another German spy [Jakobs], Richter admitted that he was a German spy and gave the Security Service full details of his mission.

Transcript

INSTRUCTIONS:

(a) Principle Assignment.

The principle purpose of RICHTER's mission was to deliver funds and a spare wireless crystal to another German agent in this country whom he was instructed to contact. An elaborate procedure had been arranged whereby RICHTER was to identify this agent and, if the initial rendezvous miscarried, a series of alternatives were arranged. RICHTER also states that he was intended to discover whether this agent was under control and whether the messages he was sending were authentic.

(b) Code:

RICHTER was given a code which in the absence of directions for constant variation would have been reasonably easy to break. There is no evidence that he had any system for varying the code.

(c) Money:

The Germans are apparently troubled at the possibility that we may change the numbers or colours of the current £1 and £10 notes. They consequently provided RICHTER with \$1,400 with instructions that he was to bury the dollar notes near the place where he landed. If he

Extract from a report giving details of Karel Richter's mission 1941-1942. Catalogue Ref: KV 2/32

had difficulty in changing the English notes he was to retrieve the dollars and change them in small amounts at the ports, but not to attempt to change them in large cities or banks.

(d) Secret Ink:

RICHTER was instructed in the use of _____tablets dissolved in alcohol for the purpose of secret writing. He did not bring any _____tablets with him, but said that he had been told to purchase an article sold in England under the name of _____which would dissolve in water and provide a secret ink. He was given detailed instructions as to how to write his messages, and was supplied with a cover address in Sweden to which he could send letters if in difficulty. _____ is in fact _____and is apparently obtainable at any chemist's shop on signing the poison book. It is the equivalent of .

(e) Questionnaire:

RICHTER was instructed to give information on the following points in his first investigations:-

(i) What was the road like, or what were roads in general like – under strict, or not strict control?

(ii) What was the control at the railway station like?

(iii) Was it necessary to show one's Identity Card?

(iv) Is it necessary to show this card when spending a night at an hotel?

(v) Are gas masks carried in England, and how?

(vi) Are they carried generally or only on journeys? He was expected to send written reports as frequently as possible and also information on the general conditions in the district in which he found himself.



Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free workshops onsite in Kew and online in your classroom.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

Find out more:

nationalarchives.gov.uk/education

education@nationalarchives.gov.uk

facebook.com/TheNationalArchivesEducationService

twitter.com/UKNatArcEdu