

# "CARELESS TALK"

A Theatre-in-Education programme for Top Juniors



## PRE-WORK

Here are some ideas that you might like to try :

(With previous projects we have found that the first two ideas have been particularly useful in building up the atmosphere of the time.)

Ask the children to gather together anything that dates from the time - to create a "Museum Corner" of Second World War artefacts, ie. clothes, photographs, domestic equipment, ration books, gas masks, letters, books, toys, records, wireless, money, old packets and tins, music, newspapers, army equipment.

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Invite grandparents or other older people from the community to visit the school to talk about their experiences in the war. Encourage them to describe the details of war-time life - rationing, air raid shelters, the use of gas-masks - as well as telling anecdotes and stories about what happened to them. Compare the experiences of living in the countryside to living in a town or city. Were any of them evacuees, or did they have evacuees billeted to their areas? The children could also interview local people, devise questionnaires to be filled in, and write to relations and friends to gather information.

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Listen to records or tapes of Winston Churchill's war speeches, as well as news bulletins of the time. Examine how Churchill boosted morale with the words he used and the way he spoke. Ask a child to read a speech in the same way, with others playing a family sitting around a wireless listening. Ask them what their reactions would be. Let them play out the scene.

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Talk about evacuation. Have the children ever been away from home by themselves - on holiday, in hospital, visiting friends or relatives? Did they enjoy it? Why? Was it exciting? Were they lonely? Or homesick? Have they ever moved to a new area, new town or country? What was it like? How did people react to them? How did they try to make themselves feel at home? How did they make new friends?

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Find out about food rationing - ask the children to bring in a "rationed lunch" instead of their usual packed lunch or canteen meal.

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Collect together books about the time and examine the images - photographs, advertisements, posters, artefacts. Read accounts of war-time experiences, here and abroad. ("Bombers and Mash - The Domestic Front 1939-1945" by Raynes Minns is a very useful book with alot of visual material and recipes of the time).

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Listen to music of the time, learn a song from that period. Listen to sound effects of air-raid sirens, aircraft flying overhead, and bombing; ask the children to imagine what it was like in an air-raid shelter during the Blitz, ask them to write an entry in a child's diary of the time.

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Ask the children to watch the television programme "Joni Jones" - Tuesday nights at 6.50pm. on BBC2 (for another three weeks)

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We also found the children's book "The Machine Gunners" by Robert Westall (Puffin Books) an exciting and vivid story set in wartime Britain.

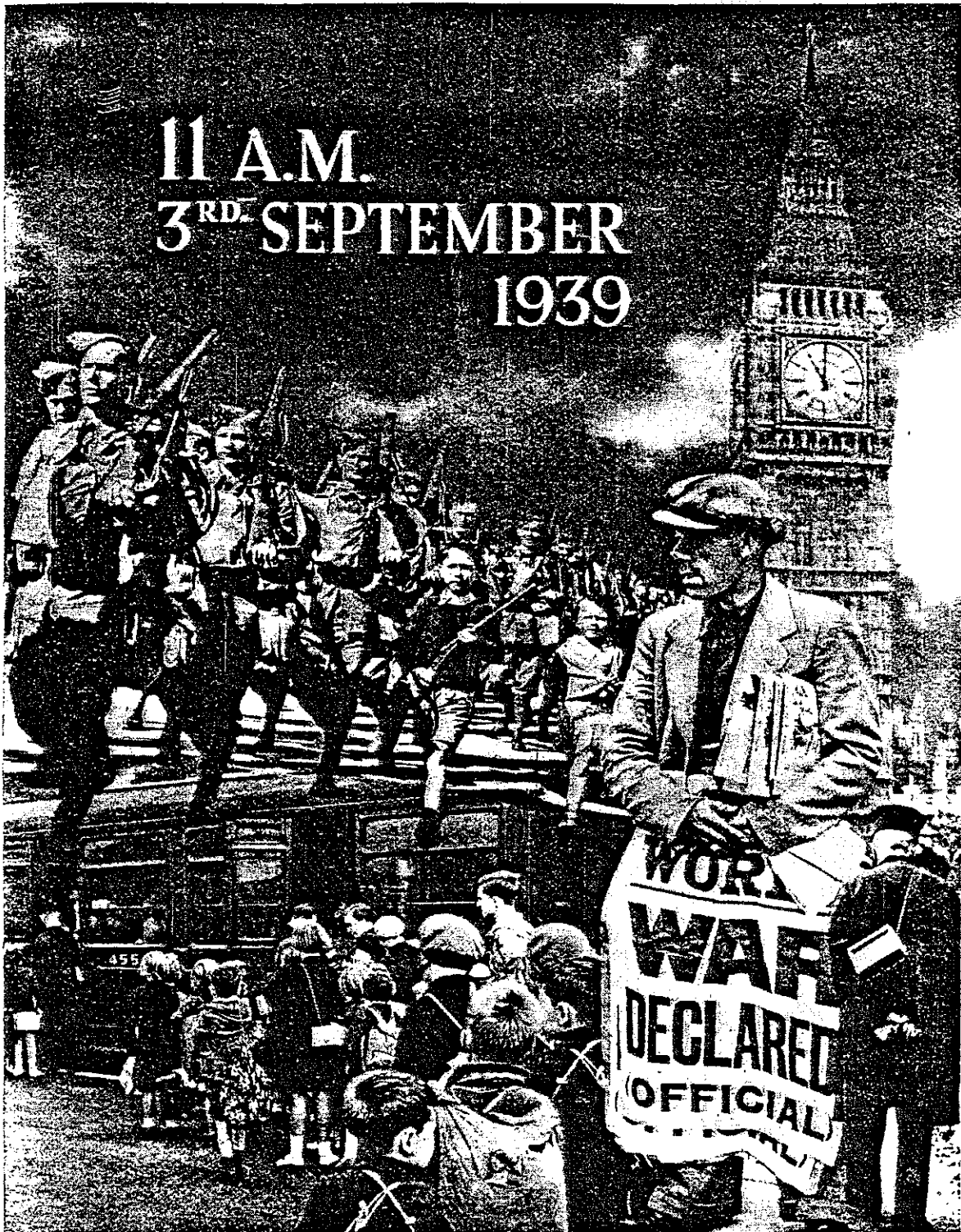


*Labelled children arriving at their billet.*

Finally, on 31 August 1939, with only twenty-four hours' warning, came the announcement: 'The Government have ordered the evacuation of schoolchildren. If your children are registered for evacuation send them to their assembly point at once.'

Heavy-hearted mothers packed a change of underclothes, washing things, a sandwich lunch and gas mask, and attached luggage labels with names and addresses to their children's coats.

On Friday 1 September 1939, 17,000 members of the Women's Voluntary Service were ready at dawn to organise a million and a half people at each stage of their journey from cities and ports throughout the British Isles to safety from the expected bombs. For many, this was their first glimpse of serious poverty in Britain - and a considerable shock. The number included 827,000 unaccompanied children, 524,000 mothers and children under five years old, 13,000 pregnant women, 7,000 blind, crippled or handicapped people with 103,000 escorts. Teachers and helpers were also included among the evacuees. With banners, flags and armbands, helpers guided their labelled herd on to trains and buses, destination unknown.



**BRITISH ULTIMATUM EXPIRES.** The British ultimatum to Germany demanding the immediate withdrawal of her troops from Poland expired at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning, 3 September, 1939. The nation, still ignorant of the fatal hour, but knowing that only a miracle could avert the death-struggle between the forces of fear and of freedom, steeled itself for the ordeal that lay before it. To the democratic governments and peoples of Britain and France fell the awful responsibility of defending the freedom of the world against Nazi domination.

*'Here we have Sunday dinner every day!' One boy gained 7lbs in one week. School dinners, along with the new milk and vitamin schemes increased multifold over the war years, resulting in a marked improvement in health especially among the children of the poor.*

Their new charges were an irritating source of amazement to foster mothers. Many of the poorer children had never seen fresh vegetables, chicken or meat and refused to eat them. Some had used neither knife nor fork before and came from dwellings where cooking was impossible with only a shared tap for a whole tenement and a slow burner to boil a kettle. They were used to a diet of sausages, fish and chips, or bread and scrape.

The children's attitudes varied. 'The country is a funny place,' one child was heard to say. 'They never tell you you can't have no more to eat, and under the bed is wasted.' Some Stepney Jewish children were overwhelmed by their new homes. 'Rose whispered for days. Everything was so clean in the room. We were given flannels and toothbrushes. We'd never cleaned our teeth up till then. And there was a lavatory upstairs, and carpets. And something called an eiderdown, and clean sheets, and all rather scary.' One child was staggered to discover that cows were bigger than dogs, having only seen them in books before. Others got confused between pigs and sheep, and a ten-year-old Cockney's essay was read on the nine o'clock news on 29 October 1939, to amuse listeners:

The cow is a mamal [sic]. It has six sides, right, left and upper and below. At the back it has a tail, on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away so they do not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with and the mouth is to moo with. Under the cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, the milk comes and there is never an end to the supply. How the cow does it I have not yet realised, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell, one can smell it far away. This is the reason for the fresh air in the country.

The man cow is called an ox. It is not a mamal. The cow does not eat much, but what it eats it eats twice, so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it moos and when it says nothing it is because all the inside is full up with grass.



The fighting on the Soviet-German front, where Hitler's Wehrmacht lost 80 per cent of its strength, was decisive in the Second World War. In the period from June 22, 1941, when the Nazis invaded the USSR, to Victory Day on May 9, 1945, a total of 607 Nazi divisions were destroyed or captured on the Eastern Front. This is three and a half times more than the Nazis lost on all the other war fronts—in North Africa, Italy and Western Europe. To achieve this military success the Soviet Armed Forces mounted nine campaigns and conducted 210 operations by groups of armies; in seven of these campaigns and 160 of these operations they took the offensive.

The road to Berlin was a long and hard one. There was fierce fighting for 1,418 days and nights along a front varying in length from 3,000 to 6,200 kilometres, as well as behind the lines in enemy-occupied territories. The Soviet people paid a high price for victory. Every minute of the war they lost nine or ten lives, 587 lives every hour and 14,000 lives every day, adding up to the staggering total of 20 million dead. Two out of every five persons killed during the Second World War were Soviet citizens. The USSR suffered tremendous material destruction to the value of 485,000 million US dollars.

Despite such losses the Soviet Army not only won through to victory in that life-and-death struggle but also liberated 113 million people in lands west of the Soviet Union.

These and many other facts of history that no one should forget are set out in this new series of pamphlets about the Second World War published by the Novosti Press Agency.



WOMEN OF BRITAIN  
**COME INTO  
THE FACTORIES**

ASK AT ANY EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR ADVICE AND FULL DETAILS

*Glossy image of 'heroic' life in a factory, making aeroplanes and tanks.*



# CLOTHING BOOK

1947-48  
GENERAL CHIT

This book must not be used until the holder's name, full postal address, and National Registration Number have been written below. Detach this book at once and keep it safe as it is your only means of buying clothing.

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(In BLOCK letters)

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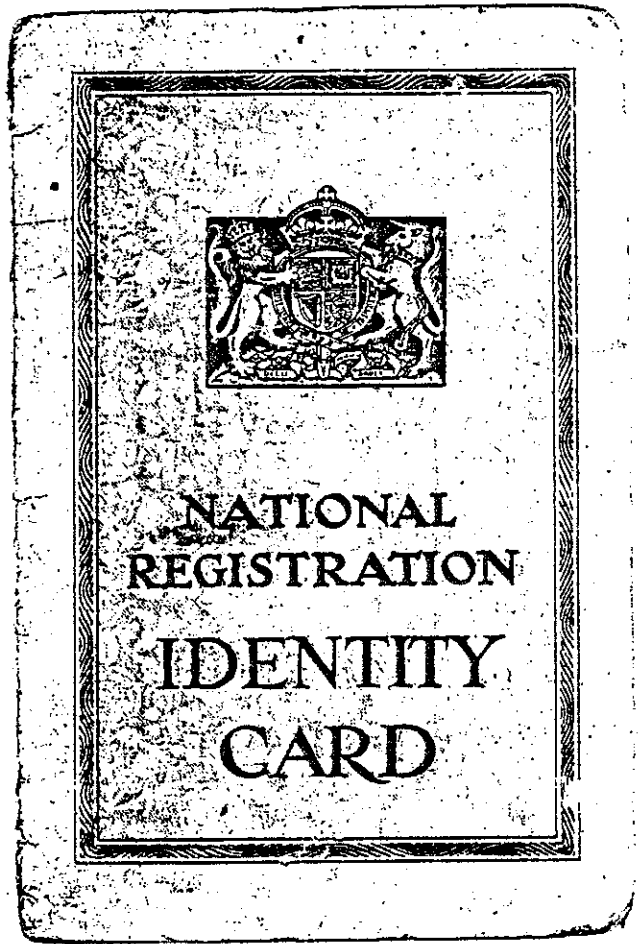
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IF FOUND, please take this book to any Food Office or Police Station.

FOOD OFFICE CODE No. Wa - G

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16

MINISTRY OF  
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1953-1954



SERIAL NO. 1

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# RATION BOOK

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**ACTIVITY ON THE WOMEN'S FRONT.** As men in greater and greater numbers were absorbed into the defence forces, their womenfolk stepped forward not only to play a magnificent part in the drive in the munitions factories, to become bus conductors and postmen, to man the farms and bring in the harvest (above), but even formed an "Amazon Corps," later the Women's Volunteer Defence Corps, who learnt rifle drill (below) with sticks and umbrellas to take a share in defending themselves against the awaited invader.



1937

April Budget provides for a National Defence Contribution.

1938

March Car manufacturers switch to aircraft part production.

Sept. 29 Munich Agreement signed by Great Britain, France, Italy & Germany.

Nov. Sir John Anderson takes charge of Air Raid Precautions (ARP) and makes evacuation plans.

1939

1½ million men & women volunteer for Civil Defence (over a million unpaid)

March Hitler invades Czechoslovakia.

April 27 Ministry of Supply set up and compulsory conscription for men aged 20-21.

Aug. 23 Ribbentrop and Molotov sign the USSR - German non-aggression pact.

Aug. 24 Emergency Powers Defence Act passed. Military reservists called up.

Aug. 25 Treaty of Alliance between Poland & England.

Aug. 31 Only 1 person in 5 interviewed by Opinion Poll anticipates war.

Sept. Control of Employment Act.

Sept. 4 out of 6 London schools requisitioned for other purposes. (6 out of 10 in Manchester.)

Sept. 7 German troops move into Poland. Evacuation of millions of children, expectant mothers & the blind. Blackout enforced. All windows papered, painted or sealed.

Estimated 140,000 hospital patients discharged (including 7-8,000 T.B. patients 'not on a peace-time standard of fitness for discharge'.) 187-195,000 new and old beds made ready for air raid casualties.

Sept. 3 War declared. Anderson shelters delivered. Cinemas, theatres, public places closed. BBC closes all channels except Home Service. Massive civilian casualties, neurosis and panic expected. Gas masks to be carried at all times.

Sept. 4 Start of phoney war. No bombardment.

Sept. 29 National Registration: identity cards issued.

Sept./Oct. War Cabinet sets up new Ministries of Food, Shipping, Economic Warfare, Information. Sir John Anderson takes over

amalgamated Ministries of Home Office and Home Security. The Ministry of National Service extends call-up age from 27 to 41.

Oct. Appeals for war workers, salvage and savings groups.

Nov. National Savings Movement launched.

Nov. 23 Last date to register for ration books

Dec. Many evacuees return for Christmas.

Most places of entertainment reopen. A million people still unemployed.

1940

Jan. Two fifths of all evacuee children and nine tenths of mothers return home. 430,000 children getting no schooling, over a million very scant schooling.

Jan. 8 Food rationing begins: 4 ozs ham, 4 ozs bacon, 12 ozs sugar, 4 ozs butter per adult person per week.

March Meat rationed to 1s 10d-worth a week for adults (about 1 lb in weight); 11d-worth for young children.

April 3 Lord Woolton becomes Minister of Food.

April 9 Germany invades Denmark and Norway.

May 10 Chamberlain resigns. Germany invades Belgium, Luxemburg and Holland. Churchill forms National Government. Local Defence Volunteers (later the Home Guard) formed.

May 13 Churchill gives his 'blood, sweat and tears' speech.

May 15 Holland surrenders.

May 22 Emergency Powers Act passed.

May 28 Belgium surrenders.

May 29-June 3 Evacuation of British and Allied troops from Dunkirk.

June Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production, appeals for scrap metal. Aircraft industry working 10 hours a day, 7 days a week.

June 5,306,000 women in civil employment.

June 14 Germans enter Paris.

July Tea, margarine and cooking fats rationed to 2 ozs a week. Illegal to serve protein in more than one course in restaurants. Cheese ration fluctuates between 2 ozs and 8 ozs per week. Supply of timber for furniture cut off. Internment begins in Great Britain of all German nationals.

July 23 Imposition of purchase tax.

Aug. Over 2 million still needed for Forces and Civil Defence.

Aug. 13 Battle of Britain: full scale air attack on South-east England.

Aug. 18 Enemy losses - 236 planes, British losses 95 planes and 160,000 tons of shipping.

Sept. 7 Blitz begins on London. People take to underground shelters on own initiative.

Half a million fewer people leave London during the Blitz than at outbreak of war.

Serious welfare problems develop.

Sept. 17 Battle of Britain won.

Sept. 23 George Cross introduced for acts of civil gallantry.

Sept. Oct. Anti-air raid services properly co-ordinated.

Sept. Nov. London bombed every night. Over 3 million homes damaged or destroyed. 30,000 dead from bombing.

Oct. 15 Peak bombing, 538 tons dropped. (Average 200 tons per 24 hours at this time.)

Oct. Maximum Price Orders on many foods. Rural nurseries (residential) too full to take more children.

Nov. 68% of mothers and children say they will not or cannot re-evacuate. Almost as many children returning to towns as leaving. 8% sleeping in public shelters. 4% in tubes. 1% in surface shelters. 13% sharing shelters. 27% in Anderson or domestic shelters. 6 out of 10 Londoners still sleeping in unsafe homes.

1941

Jan. 400,000 Morrison (inside) shelters on order. Air Training Corps launched for boys 16-18 (200,000 recruits in 6 months).

Feb. Plea from TUC to Ministry of Health for (Beveridge) report on inadequate Health Insurance.

March Battle of the Atlantic begins. Registration of Employment Order for women 20-21, later extended to 30 and men over 41. More appeals for 'immobile' women to volunteer for work. Preserves, margarine, tins etc. rationed to maximum of 8 ozs a month.

March 5 Essential Work Order controls employed workers.

March 7 Budget raises income tax to 6s 6d in the pound minimum, 10s maximum. 4,000,000 new tax payers created.

April 700,000 tons of British shipping sunk. Women's Services become part of armed forces subject to military discipline, to check flow of those wishing to resign.

May Cheese ration down to 1 oz a week.

Clothes prices 175% higher than pre-war.

Wholesale goods about 50% higher than pre-war.

June 1. Clothes rationing introduced

June 10 William Beveridge appointed to head enquiry into inadequate Social Insurance schemes.

June 22 Germany invades Russia.

June Board of Trade introduces Utility Scheme for retail goods.

July Bevin recalls 30,000 men to work in the coal mines.

Aug. Shortages result in black market and longer queues. (17/6d for 1 lb grapes, £2 for a melon.) Extra cheese rations for heavy workers.

Sept. As many civilians as soldiers have been killed up to this point.

Nov. Controlled distribution of milk. Cosmetics very scarce. Increase in juvenile delinquency of 33%, in petty thefts 200%, in malicious damage 70% since 1939.

Dec. VD statistics rise, 63% for women, 113% for men. 19,918 civilian deaths since 1940. Registration of girls and boys 16-18. Cheap milk and vitamins become available for children. National dried milk available. Magistrates orders for birching of boys under 14 increased 600% in 1941. Decreased thereafter.

Dec. 1 Points scheme introduced to complement rations.

Dec. 6 Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor.

Dec. 9 Conscription for single women between 20 and 30, liable for military service or other work. Call up age for men lowered to 18.

Dec. 10 Japanese bombers sink H.M.S. Prince of Wales and H.M.S. Repulse.

Dec. 11 U.S.A. declares war on Germany and Italy.

1942

Jan. Austerity starts in earnest. Thousands of GIs arrive in U.K.

Feb. Soap rationed to 3 ozs a month. Single bananas and onions used as raffle prizes.

Home Guards recruited to serve at ack-ack batteries. Clothing ration reduced to 48 coupons a year.

Feb. 15 Fall of Singapore.

March Fuel rationing discussed in House of Commons: stocks very low.

April 6 No more white bread.

June Hugh Dalton's Austerity regulations ban pockets, pleats, long socks. Dried egg packets appear. Restaurants allowed to charge maximum price of 5s per meal.

July 32,000 people compulsorily directed to work since June 1941. (1 million by 1945.)

Aug. Only 22 furniture designs produced on Utility Scheme.

Sept. More soldiers than women and children killed in war at this point.

1943

Jan. No unemployment. 300,000 savings groups in action. Retail prices 42% higher than pre-war. Wages 35% higher than pre-war. 'Wings for Victory' weeks. Government White Paper shows that a quarter of 611,000 boys and girls under 18 already had such long hours or travel that no extra war effort is possible on their part.

March-Sept. Major offensive by RAF Bomber Command against German towns.

April 20 cigarettes cost 1s 9d. Cosmetics very scarce. Pipe cleaners in use as hairpins. 'Victory Roll' hairstyle eliminates need for pins.

June 9 out of 10 single women, 8 out of 10 married women aged 18-40, in Forces or industry: remainder caring for young or old, or billetors, doing part-time work and out-work at home.

July Petrol, fuel, blankets, beer, food very scarce.

July 10 Allies land in Sicily.

Aug. Women and men at Rolls Royce factory strike for one week for equal pay for equal work - and get it. Female suicide figures 32% lower than 1938.

Sept. Pay as You Earn (PAYE) scheme introduced for tax payers.

Sept. 7 Italy surrenders. Number of doctors in public health service has fallen by 20% since 1939.

Dec. 1,870,000 women in trade unions.

1944

"Salute the Soldier" weeks. Women teachers' claim for equal pay rejected by Churchill as "impertinence".

Jan. Average women's wage in engineering £3.10s: average men's wage in engineering £7. Only 4 cwt of coal allowed per month.

Jan. 21 Start of 'Little Blitz'.

Jan. 22 Anzio landings.

Spring 140,000 Home Guard serving on ack-ack batteries. 1,421,000 non-British troops stationed in UK, majority American GIs. Great shortage of cots, bottle teats, rubber sheets, chamber pots. Bottles only replaced when proof presented of their breakage. Cinema audiences rise to 25-30 million a week: mostly American films.

June Peak of industrial activity in all fields. Air raid siren in Paddington fails to disperse fish queue.

June 6 D-Day. Allies land in Normandy.

June 13 First flying bomb hits London. Fresh evacuation of 1½ million from city.

Aug. 25 Liberation of Paris.

Sept. 8 First V-2 rocket reaches Britain.

Sept. 17 Arnheim air-borne raid fails.

Dec. 1 oz of extra tea for 70-year-olds and older.

1945

Jan. 12 Representation of the People Bill. Whalemeat available in fish shops - shortly followed by 'snoek' or barracuda.

Feb. 4 Yalta conference. Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt attending.

Feb. 14 Devastation of Dresden by bombing.

April 20 Russians reach Berlin.

April 30 Hitler commits suicide.

May 7 Germany surrenders.

May 8 V-E Day. Victory in Europe.

Aug. 6 USA drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Aug. 9 USA drops second atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

Aug. 14 Japan surrenders.

1940-1945

Average warnings of danger: 1 every 36 hours for 5 years. Over half the mothers of 'irregularly' conceived children were thought to have husbands in the Services. 264,444 members of Armed Forces killed during war, 277,077 wounded.

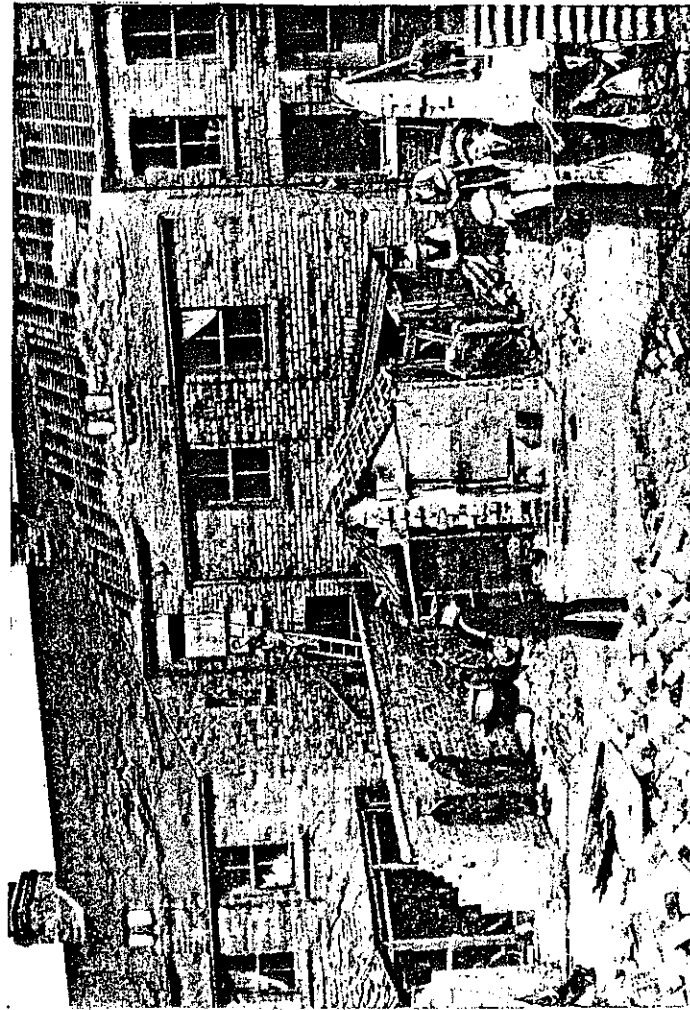
1945

25,000 divorce petitions filed (10,000 in 1938), 70% on grounds of adultery: 58% filed by husbands.

1948

March 31 46,000 war pensions awarded to civilians - widows, disabled, orphans and members of Civil Defence under the Personal Injuries (civilian) scheme.

July 5 National Insurance Scheme and National Health Service come into operation.



RAIDS ON ENGLISH TOWNS. For the first time since 1918, German bombs fell on English villages in Kent on 10 May. A fortnight later more bombs fell in Yorkshire and Essex. The long-awaited air attack found Britain well prepared. Above, the guns of an east coast anti-aircraft battery are displaying the deadly accuracy of their aim by the even spacing of their bursts of shell fire; below, residents of a Yorkshire town are clearing away the debris caused by the nearby explosion of a bomb.

WEEKLY      RATIONS

BUTTER — 2 OZS.

LARD — 2 OZS.

MARGE. — 2 OZS.

CHEESE — 2 OZS.

SUGAR — 4 OZS.

BACON — 4 OZS.

MEAT — 1/2 WORTH

CORNERD BEEF — 4d ..