

## Life on the Home Front

### *Educational support materials for groups participating in this activity*

This pack contains information designed to support teachers whose classes are visiting the RAF Museum and participating in the Home Front Activity. It is intended to provide information and suggestions for class lessons before and after the activity. All the photos and diagrams are available for reasonable reproduction to help with teaching.

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Additional images from the RAF Museum's collections can be found online at <http://navigator.rafmuseum.org/>

## **Life on the Home Front**

### ***Educational Background to the Home Front Activity***

#### ***Links to the Curriculum***

Life on the Home Front relates to a number of key areas of the National Curriculum. This section of the teacher resource pack discusses the historical and social factors which provide a background to the activity.

#### ***The Second World War***

The Second World War for Britain started in 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. There were two opposing forces comprised of a number of countries. The Allied forces included Britain, Poland, France, China, Russia, India, Yugoslavia, United States, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Burma, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Norway and Latvia. The Axis forces included Germany, Japan, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Italy. The members of both the Axis and Allied forces changed throughout the war some countries joining later or leaving earlier.

Axis forces initially appeared to be winning the war as they successfully occupied most of Europe, however this stretched their resources thinly and attempts to occupy further territory were successfully resisted, for example the Soviet Union was not defeated. Many of the occupied countries such as France and Belgium also resisted the Axis forces by sabotaging Axis bases and supply lines or helping allied air crew or prisoners of war to escape or evade capture.

The failure of the Axis air forces' campaign against the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain prevented the invasion of Britain and provided the Allies with a suitable location to assemble forces for the D-Day landings. D-Day (6<sup>th</sup> June 1944) was to result in the liberation of France from the Axis forces. This was the beginning of the end of the Second World War. The war finally ended in 1945 when Japan, the last surviving member of the Axis forces surrendered.

### ***The Blitz***

Although the Second World War did not begin until 1939, Air Raid Precautions began as early as 1938. The development of aircraft technology had led to the increasing threat of air assault and Britain began to take measures to combat possible attacks.

Britain began to clear hospitals ready for bomb victims, millions of cardboard coffins were made, 40 million gas masks were given out and people volunteered for the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) service. You will learn more about the ARP during your activity.

It was not until the summer of 1940 that German night bombing raids on Britain started and the Blitz began. The first major daylight raid on London occurred on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1940. 350 bombing aircraft and 650 fighting aircraft were used to attack important areas such as London's Docks and oil refineries, in this raid. The bombing lasted all through the night until 8<sup>th</sup> September, killing at least 400 people and injuring 1600 others. The Blitz continued until May 1941 when Germany turned her attention to Russia.

A siren sounded to warn the people of a possible air attack (an Air Raid). When you heard the siren you had to find shelter as quickly as possible.

Remember that it was not just British cities that were attacked during bombing raids. The Royal Air Force (RAF) attacked German cities including Berlin, damaging buildings, destroying schools and killing citizens.

### ***Air Raid Shelters***

During September 1940 approximately 177,000 people in London, were living underground, using stations on the London Underground as shelters.

Two, more common, methods of air raid protection were the Anderson Shelter and the Morrison Shelter.

The Anderson Shelter was built outside in the garden. It was made out of corrugated iron and was half buried in the garden and covered with 40 - 50 cm of soil. Over 20 million Anderson Shelters were built and each shelter could hold up to 6 people. They were not very big and so could get quite cramped, but they offered some security against the bombs that could be travelling in their direction.

The Morrison Shelter was used in the home. It was a strong metal mesh box which people could hide in. They would often keep it in the living room where it could be used as a table when it wasn't being used as a shelter.

### ***The Blackout***

Britain was blacked out on 1st September 1939, two days before the outbreak of war.

Everyone had to cover their windows and doors at night with heavy black out curtains, cardboard or paint to prevent any glimmer of light from escaping and aiding enemy aircraft during their bombing raids. This is because the bright lights of the city would make any city or town an easy target for bombs.

Street lights were switched off or dimmed and shielded to deflect their light downwards. Traffic lights and vehicle headlights were fitted with slotted covers to deflect their beam down to the ground.

The number of road accidents increased because of the reduced street lighting. A number of measures were taken to try and prevent these accidents:

- White stripes were painted on the roads and on lamp posts.
- People were encouraged to walk facing the traffic.
- Men were advised to leave their shirt tails hanging out so that they could be seen by cars with dimmed headlamps.

People were also injured in accidents during the blackout because they could not see in the darkness. Many people were hurt tripping up, falling down stairs or bumping into things.

### ***Gas Attacks and Gas Masks***

Gas was a very nasty weapon that could be dropped from aeroplanes. There were several types of gas and they were all poisonous. Many soldiers had been gassed during the First World War. It was feared that if gas was dropped on Britain it would kill many men, women and children.

The Government decided that it would be a good idea to issue everyone with their own gas mask. 40 million gas masks were given out. These masks were made of rubber and were easy to put on but had to fit tightly around the face to prevent gas from getting in. They were not very comfortable and would quickly steam up inside. There were special ones for children, made of red rubber. They were made to look like Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse; even so, children did not like them very much as they were uncomfortable.

Poisonous gas was detected by painting the tops of pillar boxes yellow with a special kind of paint that would change colour if there was any gas in the air. This would act as a warning to everybody in the street. Gas masks had to be carried at all times in their cardboard case. Some cinemas would not let a person in without their gas mask. However, the Germans did not drop any poisonous gas and soon people tired of carrying their gas masks.

### ***Rationing***

Before the Second World War, Britain imported about 55 million tons of food a year from other countries. After the war was declared in September 1939, the British Government was not able to import the same amount of food from abroad as German submarines started sinking British merchant ships. There was a worry that this would lead to shortages of food in the shops so the Government decided to introduce a system of rationing.

Rationing was introduced on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1940, starting with bacon, butter and sugar.

Everybody was issued with ration books. Ration books contained coupons that shopkeepers clipped out of the books when people bought food and other items. This controlled the amount of an item people were able to buy. Sometimes even if you had the correct coupons, you would not be able to buy everything you wanted because the shop would have run out. This led to huge queues outside shops when items such as sugar were in stock.

Increasingly more food items were rationed. Meat, tea, butter and margarine were all rationed by the end of 1940. Jam, cheese and eggs were added by the end of 1941 and in 1942, rice, dried fruit, canned tomatoes, canned peas, cereals, condensed milk, sweets and chocolate were all rationed.

Rationing had its peak in August 1942 when one person was allowed;

- 1 shilling and tuppence worth of meat (e.g. 1 pork chop and 4 sausages)
- 8 Ounces (227g) of butter, margarine or lard (1 packet)
- 8 Ounces (227g) of sugar
- 4 Ounces (113g) of bacon or ham (4 rashers of bacon)
- 2 Ounces (57g) of tea (half a packet or the equivalent of 15 teabags)
- 2 Ounces (57g) of cheese
- 1 egg

The Dig for Victory campaign was introduced at the beginning of the war to encourage the whole of Britain to change their gardens into small allotments. Britain was transformed in only a few months; its gardens, flowerbeds and parks were dug up to plant vegetables and fruit.

It was not just food that was rationed; petrol, furniture and clothing were also restricted.

Some rationed items such as petrol, clothing, meat and furniture were available on the Black Market. The Black Market was an illegal supply of rationed items, which did not require coupons or a ration book, but was often quite expensive. Outlets ranged from extra meat from the butcher, to items sold out of a suitcase in an alleyway or bought from a man in the pub. The Black Market had similar supply problems to the shops and often had nothing for sale.



Anderson Shelter, the soil on top of the shelter is being used to grow vegetables as part of the Dig for Victory campaign.



Result of a German flying bomb attack on a row of semi detached houses.



Result of an RAF air attack on a German airfield. The building shown was an aircraft hangar.



Result of an RAF air raid on a Gestapo headquarters in Denmark. This attack was not without civilian casualties as one of the Mosquito bombers in this raid crashed into a nearby school, killing over 100 staff and pupils.

# Life on the Home Front

## *Activities for the classroom*

### *Links to the Curriculum*

Home Front relates to a number of key areas of the National Curriculum. This teacher resource pack is intended to provide some suggestions for classroom activities for a variety of subjects.

### *History Activities*

**Activity:** Try to plan a week's worth of meals based on the food available in your ration book. Remember you can add fruit and vegetables you have grown in your own garden. Can you think of any tasty ways to make food last longer? Try swapping rationed ingredients in well known dishes for those off the ration e.g. Chocolate spread made with cocoa powder and mashed potatoes.

**Activity:** Try shopping for clothes using the ration book you received when you visited the museum and the clothing sheet included in this pack. Would you normally buy more clothes than this or not?

**Research:** During the Second World War people often had to Make do and Mend because of rationing. What different ideas did people think of? Can you think of any others? Does your family Make do and Mend today? Can you think of anything similar to this idea that we do today e.g. recycling?

**Research:** What happened in your local area during the Second World War? Were there any bombing raids? Can you find any buildings that have survived the Second World War? Try talking to some of your community's older people; do they have any memories of the Second World War?

**Activity:** Look at the jobs people could do on the Home Front during the Second World War e.g. Fire Watching, Women's Land Army, Air Raid Warden, Women's Voluntary Service or the Home Guard. Would you like to do any of these jobs? Why?

### ***English Activities***

**Letter Writing:** Write a letter to the people who led your activity or to the Education Team at the RAF Museum, to tell them how you felt about your trip and what you learnt.

**Creative Writing:** Write a first person account of what it feels like to live during the Second World War. Why not write about what new meals you may have eaten, how you felt during a recent air raid or even how you are coping without sweets and chocolate.

**Role Play:** Act out a typical wartime scene in small groups. Themes could include queuing for sugar in a shop, which runs out before everyone has had their ration, building an Anderson Shelter, sheltering from a bombing raid, growing vegetables or looking for wild fruit in hedgerows e.g. blackberry picking or acorn collecting.

### ***Art Activities***

**Activity:** Draw or paint a picture showing the damage done in a bombing raid. Try to convey how you feel about air raids. Did your perception change after the Home Front activity?

### ***Science Activities***

**Activity:** Look at how aircraft fly. What are the forces involved? Try designing a paper aeroplane.

**Activity:** Look at the food types and amounts available during August 1942. Do you think that this is a healthy diet? Would you have enough food to grow?

**Activity:** Look at how incendiary bombs work. How does burning affect the materials in trees and houses? Can these changes be reversed?

**Activity:** Look at the Blackout. Why were some materials used to block lights from windows instead of others?

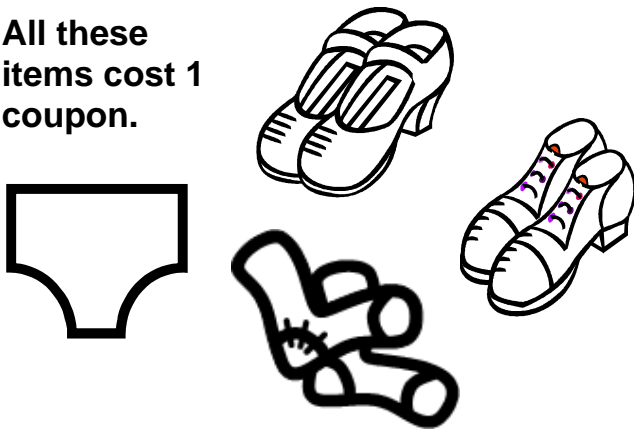
## Life on the Home Front

### Additional Resources

During the Second World War, not only food was rationed but clothes were as well.

You have 8 coupons to buy some clothes with. When you have decided which clothes you can afford, colour them in, cut them out and glue them into your cupboard worksheet. Don't forget to mark off the coupons you have used in your ration book.

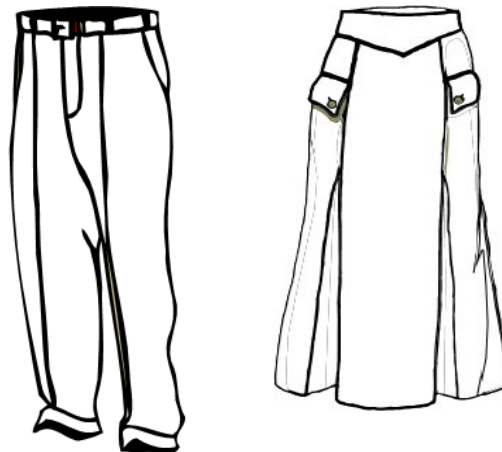
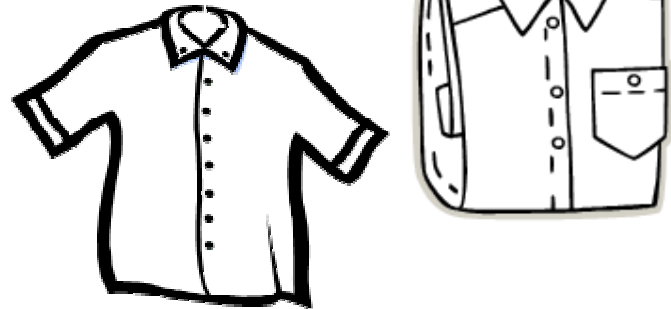
All these items cost 1 coupon.



These items use more material so they cost 2 coupons.



These items use a lot of material so they cost 3 coupons.



## WARTIME RECIPES

### Light meals and lunches

#### Fish and potato pancake

1 finely chopped onion	1 teaspoon vinegar
½ oz. dripping	1 teaspoon salt
¾ lb. potatoes, cooked and sliced	pepper
1lb. cod, cooked and flaked	chopped parsley

Fry the onion in the dripping until tender. Add the potatoes and fish, and then fry until brown. Sprinkle with vinegar, salt pepper and parsley. Serve hot.

#### Sardines in curry sauce

1 teaspoon curry powder	4 tablespoons water
2 spring onions finely chopped	¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dripping	4 ½ oz. sardines
Few drops of vinegar	1 tablespoon flour
1 round of toast	

Fry the curry powder and the onion in the dripping for a few minutes. Work in the flour, add the water gradually and bring to the boil, stirring all the time. Boil gently for five minutes and add the salt and vinegar. Place the sardines on toast and pour over the curry sauce.

#### Fish salad

1 cup chopped spinach	4 pilchards
1 ½ cups grated carrot	salad dressing
1 cup sliced cauliflower	sprigs of cauliflower

Mix spinach, carrot and cauliflower together. Lay fish on top and decorate with salad dressing and sprigs of cauliflower.

#### Mock oysters

6 boned and skinned sardines	2 tablespoons cream
6 boiled artichokes	salt and pepper
Stale breadcrumbs	oyster shells

Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly and use to fill oyster shells. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and brown in an oven. Serve very hot.

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### Cabbage and fruit salad

3 cups finely shredded cabbage	1 cup chopped apple
1 tablespoon finely chopped onion	½ cup chopped pear
1 dessertspoon chopped mint	½ cup grated carrot
4 tablespoons salad dressing	salt and pepper

Mix together the cabbage, apple, pear, onion, carrot and mint. Moisten with the salad dressing and add a little salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with sprigs on mint.

### Egg and cabbage salad

4 hard boiled eggs (dried)	1 large tomato
4 cups finely shredded cabbage	¼ pint salad dressing
1/4 cup chopped, cooked beetroot	1 cup chopped watercress

Chop up three eggs in to small dice and mix with cabbage, cress and salad dressing. Place in salad bowl and decorate with remaining egg, tomato and beetroot.

### Pea Puree

½ teaspoon sugar	½ lb. peas
1 dessertspoon chopped mint	margarine
Stale bread	1 pint water

Add the sugar to the water and cook the peas until tender. Drain and mash the peas, then mix in the margarine, mint and seasoning. Cut the bread into chunks and fry to serve as croutons. Serve very hot.

### Butter beans savoury

½ lb. butter beans	1 onion
1 lb. cooked potatoes	1 apple
1 pint white sauce	2 oz. fat
Salt and pepper	water

Soak the beans overnight. Cook the beans with the onion, then strain them and add them to the white sauce. Season well, slice the apple and potato and fry in hot fat, pour the beans onto a hot dish and serve surrounded by fried apples and potatoes.

N.B. Stinging nettles can be substituted for Cabbage if in short supply

## Sandwich Spreads

### Savoury potato spread

4oz. mashed potatoes

4oz. beans

Mix the ingredients together and spread on bread.

### Fish and cabbage spread

4 oz. pilchards or sardines

1 tablespoon vinegar

4oz. finely shredded cabbage

1 teaspoon mustard

1 teaspoon chopped parsley

2 teaspoons salt

Mix all the ingredients together, including some of the oil from the fish. Beat well and use as a filling for scones and rolls.

### Savoury leek spread

2 oz. dripping

3 teaspoons Worcester

1 tablespoon finely chopped leek

sauce

1 tablespoon vegetable or  
meat extract

salt and pepper to taste

Slightly melt the dripping and beat well. Add the other ingredients and beat again.

### Sweet spread

1 oz. margarine

1 tablespoon strong coffee

1 dessertspoon syrup

3 dessertspoons cocoa

Mix ingredients well and spread on bread.

### Carrot spread

2 grated carrots

1 shredded cabbage heart

Mustard

vinegar

Bind the carrot and cabbage with mustard and flavour with a dash of vinegar.

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## Main Meals

### Savoury Sprouts

3 tablespoons grated cheese	½ lb sprouts
Few drops lemon essence	1 ½ tablespoons flour
½ cup vegetable water and milk	½ teaspoon salt
Pepper	

Prepare the sprouts and cook in a little boiling salted water until tender; drain and keep hot, saving the liquid. Blend the flour with a little of the liquid, bring the remainder to the boil and pour on to the blended flour. Return to the pan; bring to the boil, stirring all the time, and boil gently for five minutes. Add the cheese, a few drops of lemon essence and season well. Add the sprouts, reheat and serve very hot.

### Stuffing with squeezed soaked bread

6 oz. stale, soaked, squeezed bread	1 chopped onion
3 tablespoons chopped parsley	1 oz. suet
2 teaspoons mixed herbs	½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon salt	

Mix together the bread and onion. Chop and add the suet to the mix. Add the remaining ingredients. Mix well.

### Potato pastry

4 oz. mashed potatoes	½ teaspoon salt
8 oz. plain flour	2 oz. fat

Mix the flour and the salt. Cream the fat and the potato, add the flour and a little water if necessary, to form a stiff dough. This pastry is very good used as a crust on meat pies or savoury flans. It should be eaten soon after baking as it becomes very dry if re-heated.

### Potato suet pastry

8 oz. plain flour	½ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking powder	2 oz. suet
2 oz. grated raw potato	water to mix

Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together. Mix in the suet and potato. Mix to a stiff dough using water. Use for meat puddings, fruit puddings and dumplings.

### Dresden patties

¼ pint stock or vegetable water	1 oz. dripping
1 teaspoon Worcester sauce	1 oz. plain flour
4 oz. chopped, cooked meat	1 teaspoon salt
4 oz. chopped, cooked vegetables	½ teaspoon pepper
4 rounds of bread	chopped parsley

Heat the dripping, add the flour and cook until slightly browned. Gradually stir in the liquid, bring to the boil and cook for five minutes stirring all the time. Add the meat, vegetables, seasoning and sauce. Keep hot while frying the bread. Trim the rounds of bread and cut a small circle from the centre of each. Fry rounds and circles in hot fat until golden brown. Drain well and fill centres with meat mixture. Place circles on top to form a lid and serve hot with a sprinkling of chopped parsley.

### Creamed sardine pie

3 tablespoons flour	1 teaspoon vinegar
½ pint milk and water	4 ½ sardines in oil
1 teaspoon salt	6 oz. potato pastry
Pinch of pepper	a little milk
Pinch of nutmeg	

Blend the flour with the milk, bring to the boil, stirring all the time and boil gently for five minutes. Add the seasoning, nutmeg and vinegar. Mix well and beat in the sardines with the oil. Line a six inch sandwich tin with half the pastry, add the mixture and cover with the remaining pastry. Brush the top with a little milk and bake in a hot oven for thirty minutes. Serve hot or cold.

### Mock Duck

2lb sausage meat	1 lb grated onions
1 lb grated cooking apples	1 teaspoon dried sage

Spread half the sausage meat into a well greased baking tray. Top with apple, onion and sage. Add the rest of the sausage meat and shape to look like a duck. Cover with well greased baking paper and bake in a moderate oven for forty five minutes.

## Grilled Pigeon

4 pigeons

lard for frying

Mixed herbs

Wash and dry the pigeons and split lengthways, season and brush generously with melted lard. Grill, skin upwards, for five minutes. Turn over, brush with more melted lard and continue to grill for five minutes. Turn the pigeons over again and grill until tender. Serve hot.

## Barley mince

3 oz. pearl barley

1 ½ pints water

1 teaspoon beef extract

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon mixed herbs

½ teaspoon pepper

4 oz. chopped, cooked meat

1 chopped onion

1 tablespoon flour

gravy browning

Cook the barley in the water with the herbs and onion until tender, about one hour. Strain off the water and make up to ½ pint. Blend the flour with a little of this liquid, then add the remainder, stir until it thickens and boil for five minutes. Add the beef extract, seasoning, meat, barley and enough browning to give it a good colour. Warm through over a very low heat for about ten minutes. Serve very hot with vegetables.

## Creamed cabbage

1 ½ lb shredded cabbage

¾ pint water

3 tablespoons flour

½ oz. dripping

4 tablespoons grated cheese

2 teaspoons salt

Pinch of pepper

Boil half a pint of water, add the cabbage and salt and boil for five minutes. Add the dripping to this. Blend the flour and cheese with the remaining ¼ pint of water, add the cabbage, season well and cook for another ten minutes. Serve hot.

N.B. Stinging nettles can be substituted for Cabbage if in short supply

## Puddings

### Steamed custard

2 reconstituted eggs  
Flavouring

½ pint milk  
sugar

Beat eggs and sugar, add milk and flavouring. Pour into a greased cup and steam in saucepan until set.

### Baked custard

1 ½ reconstituted eggs  
Sugar

½ pint milk  
flavouring

Beat egg and sugar, add milk and flavouring. Pour into a greased dish and bake until set in a slow oven. This can be baked in a potato pastry case and served as a custard flan.

### Summer pudding

8 oz. fresh fruit  
5 oz. stale bread

¼ pint water  
1 oz. sugar

Stew the fruit with the sugar and water until tender. Cut a round of bread to fit the bottom of a one pint sized basin and line the sides with fingers of bread, cut slightly wider at one end than the other. Fit the fingers of bread together so none of the basin shows through. Half fill the basin with stewed fruit. Cover with a layer of the remaining bread and add the remaining fruit. Cover with a final layer of bread. Pour the rest of the juice over the pudding and cover with a weighted plate. Leave for at least two hours to cool and set. Serve with custard.

### Crispy pudding

Cold steamed pudding  
Margarine

sugar

Fry the slices of cold steamed pudding in hot margarine until crisp on both sides. Drain well and sprinkle with sugar. Serve very hot.

### Dripping cake

8 oz. self raising flour	3 oz. sugar
½ teaspoon mixed spice	¼ pint milk
2 oz. clarified dripping	½ teaspoon salt
3 oz dried fruit	

Sift the flour, salt and spices together. Rub in the fat and add the sugar and fruit. Mix to a soft consistency with the milk and turn into a greased six inch cake tin. Bake in a moderate oven for twenty minutes. If mutton dripping is used it will need to be slightly warmed to make it easier to rub in.

### Mock cream

1 tablespoon warm water	1 oz. margarine
Peppermint essence to taste	1 oz. sugar
1 tablespoon of dried milk	

Cream the margarine and sugar until white and smooth. Add the milk and water gradually, beating well until quite smooth. Add a few drops of flavouring to taste.

### Condensed milk cake

8 oz. self raising flour	3 oz. margarine
3 oz. sultanas	1 oz. sugar
1 tablespoon marmalade	2 dried eggs
3 tablespoons condensed milk made up to ¼ pint with water	

Rub the margarine into the flour and add the sugar and sultanas. Mix to a soft consistency with the marmalade, milk and beaten eggs. Turn into a greased six inch cake tin and bake in a moderate oven for forty five minutes.

### Milk jelly whip

¼ pint evaporated milk	1 pint jelly mix
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Dissolve the jelly mix, following the instructions on the packet, but only make it up to ¾ pint instead of one pint. Leave to cool and when just beginning to set, stir in the evaporated milk, whisk until light and frothy. Serve cold.

## Snacks

### Crumb fudge

2 tablespoons syrup	2 oz. margarine
6 oz. dried bread crumbs	2 oz. sugar
Few drops vanilla essence	2 oz. cocoa

Heat the syrup, margarine, cocoa and sugar gently until all are melted. Stir in the flavouring and then the bread crumbs. Mix thoroughly and turn into a well greased seven inch sandwich tin; spread evenly into fingers or squares. Leave for twenty four hours before eating. This fudge improves with keeping for a day or two.

### Plain or sweet biscuits

4 oz. plain flour	3 oz. margarine
4 oz. cold mashed potatoes	4 oz. rolled oats
2 oz. sugar (sweet biscuits)	2 teaspoons salt

Mix the flour, rolled oats, salt and sugar (sweet biscuits only). Rub in the margarine and then knead in the mashed potato. Continue kneading until the whole is a very stiff dough. No liquid should be used. Roll out until 1/8 inch thick and cut into biscuits. Place on tins and bake in a slow oven until crisp, about fifteen minutes. Cool on cake racks to ensure they stay crisp.

### Savoury potato biscuits

3 oz. cooked mashed potato	2 oz. margarine
6 tablespoons grated cheese	3 oz. plain flour
Pinch of black pepper	1 ½ teaspoons salt

Rub the margarine into the flour. Add the potato, cheese and seasoning and work to a stiff dough. Roll out thinly, cut into shapes and bake in a moderate oven for fifteen minutes.

### Mock Bananas

Parsnips	Banana Essence
Sugar	Water

Peel the parsnips and cook in a small amount of water until tender. Slice the cooked parsnips and put into a bowl and mash. Add banana essence until you get the right taste. Add sugar to taste then mash until smooth. Serve as a sandwich filling, on sweet biscuits or as a desert.