

Buckinghamshire in World War Two

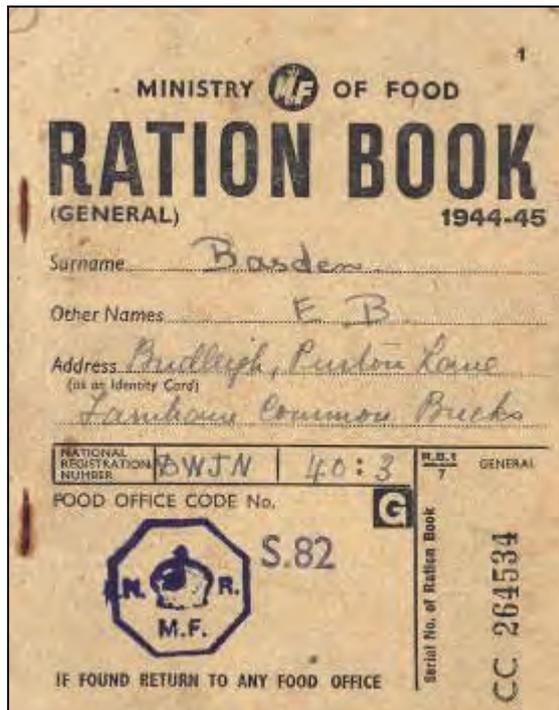
Rationing



Market stalls and shoppers in Aylesbury Market Square, c.1945 phAylesbury1683)

Before war broke out Britain imported around 55 million tons of products from other parts of the world like America, Africa, Europe and the Far East. Food like bananas, sugar, tea, rice, and oil as well as materials like rubber, wood and oil for petrol all came by boat from overseas. Not surprisingly one of Hitler's main objectives was to stop all sea-borne trade and so literally starve Britain into surrender. Using battle-ships and U-boats the Nazis succeeded in sinking over 2,500 merchant ships.

The British government foresaw the danger and from early in the war rationing was introduced whereby people were limited in the amount and variety of food they could buy.



Ration books were being printed before the war : Buff (a pale brown) for adults; blue for children aged 3-16 and green for infants under 3.

This is the ration book of Ernest B. Basden who lived at Farnham Royal. The names and address of the shops where he could get his rations are written at the front. The Co-op was one of the few stores resembling a modern day supermarket and Slough was a big enough place to have one. (D113/81)



This photograph shows Welch's Butchers shop in Whielden Street, Amersham (phAmersham25)

At first householders had to register with particular shops and buy their food only from those. Supermarkets were virtually unknown at this time and people used individual shops: butchers, bakers, grocers etc. Shopkeepers were supposed to be supplied with enough food to sell to the people registered with them. Prices were fixed to prevent some shops charging more than others and to keep prices from soaring because of shortages.

MINISTRY  OF FOOD

REASONS FOR RATIONING

War has meant the re-planning of our food supplies. Half our meat and most of our bacon, butter and sugar come from overseas. Here are four reasons for rationing —

- ① **RATIONING PREVENTS WASTE OF FOOD** We must not ask our sailors to bring us unnecessary food cargoes at the risk of their lives.
- ② **RATIONING INCREASES OUR WAR EFFORT** Our shipping carries food, and armaments in their raw and finished state, and other essential raw materials for home consumption and the export trade. To reduce our purchases of food abroad is to release ships for bringing us other imports. So we shall strengthen our war effort.
- ③ **RATIONING DIVIDES SUPPLIES EQUALLY.** There will be ample supplies for our 44½ million people, but we must divide them fairly, everyone being treated alike. No one must be left out.
- ④ **RATIONING PREVENTS UNCERTAINTY** Your Ration Book assures you of your fair share. Rationing means that there will be no uncertainty — *and no queues.*

YOUR RATION BOOK IS YOUR PASSPORT TO EASY PURCHASING OF BACON & HAM, BUTTER AND SUGAR

AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, 67, WESTMINSTER HOUSE, LONDON, S.W.1

Newspapers were used to tell people about rationing. This advert, taken from the *Bucks Herald* 12 January 1940, appeared in all local and national newspapers. Some more are shown on the following pages.

The Basel Diet

In the summer of 1940 a committee of nutritional experts worked out a daily basic diet sufficient to keep the average adult briton healthy through the war:

- 12oz (350g) bread
- 1lb (454g) potatoes
- 2oz (50g) oatmeal
- 1oz (25g) fat
- 6oz (150g) vegetables
- 6/10ths of 1 pint of milk
- small amounts on cheese, pulses, meat, fish, sugar, eggs and dried fruit.

Fortunately, Winston Churchill and the Ministry of Food realised the diet was unappealing and therefore unworkable and the ration book approach was used.



Rationing was introduced in stages during the course of the war. It started in January 1940 when fixed amounts of bacon, ham, sugar and butter were allowed per person per week. Meat followed in March 1940 and tea, margarine and cheese in July. The amounts allowed were changed from time to time and allowances were made for pregnant women and small children.

By 1942 when rationing was at its height a week's ration for an adult looked like this:

- Bacon and ham:** 4oz (100g)
- Meat:** To the value of 1s.2d (6p today). (perhaps a pork chop and four sausages) Sausages were not rationed but difficult to get; offal (liver, kidneys, tripe) was not originally rationed but sometimes formed part of the meat ration.
- Cheese:** 2oz(50g) sometimes it went up to 4oz (100g) and even up to 8oz (225g).
- Margarine:** 4oz (100g)
- Butter:** 2oz (50g)
- Milk:** 3 pints(1800ml) occasionally dropping to 2 pints (1200ml). Household milk (skimmed or dried) was available : 1 packet per four weeks.
- Sugar:** 8oz (225g).
- Jam:** 1lb (450g) every two months.
- Tea:** 2oz (50g). (half a packet or the equivalent of 15 tea bags)
- Eggs:** 1 fresh egg a week if available but often only one every two weeks. Dried eggs 1 packet every four weeks.
- Sweets:** 12oz (350g) every four weeks

How rationing affected children

Imported fruit all but disappeared from the shops, so while apples and pears could be bought, bananas and oranges were absent until long after the war had ended. Sweets and chocolate were limited to 2oz per person per week from July 1942. Kind mothers made toffee using black treacle or a sort of peppermint lump using peppermint juice available from the chemist. Sugar rationing meant much fewer sweet things and children were encouraged to eat carrots as snacks. Nicknamed "Dr. Carrot", carrot recipes abounded, including a homemade drink called *Carrolade* made from carrot and swede juice strained through a muslin sieve. Biscuits were also rationed and even bread, although not rationed until the end of the war, was made so as to use as much of the husk as possible. The "National Loaf" was a solid wholemeal bread; white bread became virtually unobtainable. However, from December 1941 schoolchildren received 1/3 of a pint of milk a day and cheap nutritious school meals were made more widely available: mainly potatoes, dumplings and vegetables.



Children at Queen's Park school, Aylesbury setting up a shop, 1949 (phAylesbury2019)

Points System

In December 1941 the points system was introduced. 16 points per month were allowed to each shopper. Specified foods, particularly canned and dried foods, were also given a certain number of points and the shopper could use their points to buy different things each month or even save their points from one month to the next. These points were included in the back of the ration book.

This is an advert placed in the newspaper to explain about points rationing.
(D113/63)

**MORE FOODS ON
POINT
RATIONING**

The extension of the war to the Far East has made it necessary to include from Monday, January 26th, some additional foods — they are listed below — in the Points Rationing Scheme. This means that they may not be bought without surrendering coupons. In the next Points Rationing four-weekly period, Feb. 9th to March 8th, the points value of your coupons will be increased from 16 to 20. But for the current half-period (until Feb. 9th) it is not practicable to alter the value of those coupons which are still unused.

2 POINTS PER LB.

Whole rice (excluding ground rice and flaked rice and any other rice products).
Sago.
Tapioca.
Imported dried beans (excluding seed beans).
Lentils and split lentils.

Other rationing

It wasn't just food that was rationed: petrol, clothes, even soap and washing powder. Some things never rationed were extremely hard to get hold of – string, pencils and paper for example.

Rationing continued for several years even after the war had ended. One person could end up with a whole collection of ration books! Here are food, clothing and fuel ration books belonging to Ernest Basden who lived in Farnham Royal. (D113/81)

FOSTER BROTHERS
Christmas Gifts
GUIDE TO COUPON SHOPPING
COUPON FREE

All the following:
 Men's Smart Felt Hats
 Men's Caps in smart designs
 Sweaters in various colours
 Men's well made Strong Bras

ONE COUPON ONLY

| | |
|---|--|
| Scarves A. Broad B. Narrow 1st class 2nd class 3/6 to 7/11 | Tunic Shirts 12 Coupons Tortoiseshell Tweed Corduroy 1/6-15/6 |
| Smart Ties A. 1/2 in. x 4 in. B. 1/2 in. x 4 in. C. 1/2 in. x 4 in. 1/6 to 4/6 | Leather Gloves 12 Coupons Appl. material of a medium kind of leather 9/11 to 15/6 |
| Handkerchiefs 1. Handkerchiefs 2. Handkerchiefs 3. Handkerchiefs 1/6 to 1/6 | Men's Wool Socks 1/11 to 3/11 (3 Coupons) Men's Pinstriped Vests 4/6 to 12/6 (4 Coupons) Smart Slipovers 7/11 to 9/11 (5 Coupons) Dressing Gowns 40/11 to 60/11 (8 Coupons) Men's Pyjamas 9/6 to 12/6 (8 Coupons) |

FOSTER BROTHERS
 15, MARKET SQUARE, AYLESBURY
 3, White Hart Street, High Wycombe

Christmas Advert from the Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News, 1941, giving coupon as well as monetary value.

MINISTRY OF FOOD. TRAVELLER'S RATION BOOK
 INSTRUCTIONS T 8 No 55
 ANY FOOD OFFICE.
 Read these Instructions carefully.
 1. This book entitles you to obtain food in the form of any rationed articles.
 Food Office of: _____ Date: _____
 Signature: **BASDEN**
 Initially: **E. B. DWTN 142373**
 Address: **15, MARKET SQUARE, AYLESBURY, BUCKS.**
 Percentage of ration: **100%**
 Name of address: **Farnham Royal House**
 Sub. No. **15/11/48**
 FOOD OFFICE CODE No. **9**
 IF FOUND RETURN TO ANY FOOD OFFICE

CLOTHING BOOK 1946-47
 GENERAL C.B. 1
 This Book entitles you to obtain under the Rationing system full personal address and National Registration Number have been entered before. Check the book at once and keep it safe. It is your only means of buying clothing.
 HOLDER'S NAME: **BASDEN, E. B.**
 ADDRESS: **15, MARKET SQUARE, AYLESBURY, BUCKS.**
 HOLDER'S NATIONAL REGISTRATION No. **DWTN 142373**

KX 142373 This Book is the one used by the Ministry of Fuel for the six months **DECEMBER 1948 to MAY 1949**
 Motor Fuel Standard Ration Book
 Motor Cycle
M/C OVER 250 C.C.
 MONTH OF **DECEMBER 1948**

PLEASE USE LESS BRYLCREEM

‘Use less and save more’ applies to goods as much as to money. There is much less Brylcreem in the shops so when you have a bottle, please make it go twice as far. One obvious way is to use half the normal quantity. It will be sufficient to keep your hair smart and healthy. Here are—

TWO HELPFUL TIPS

(1) It is important to shake the bottle the right way, for ‘expert shaking’ makes the Cream ‘Fluid,’ thus enabling you to control the flow. Grasp the bottle as shown (note the finger firmly on the cap), then flick the wrist smartly to and fro in semi-rotary fashion. In a few seconds you’ll be able to measure an economical quantity from the even-flowing Cream.

(2) When the bottle is nearly empty add a teaspoonful of clean, cold water, shake vigorously for a minute and note how cleanly the Cream comes from the Bottle. Yes! You can use the last drop.

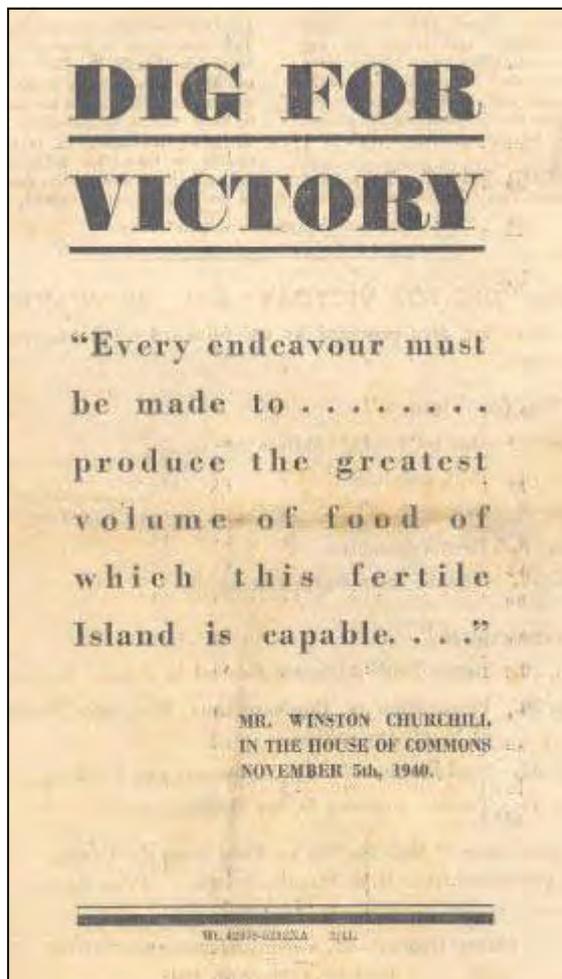
BRYLCREEM—The Perfect Hairdressing
 regd. 7760

Tips on economical living were not confined to food, as this Brylcreem advert shows. (D113/63)

Dig for Victory

This was a slogan adopted by the government from the outbreak of war. The whole population was encouraged to transform their gardens into fruit and vegetable growing allotments to counteract the food shortage. Even parks, golf clubs and tennis courts were dug up and planted. In the country farmers ploughed up grass fields and drained boggy land to grow more food crops. Even songs were written to encourage people to grow their own food:

*Dig! Dig! Dig! And your muscles will grow big
Keep on pushing the spade
Don't mind the worms
Just ignore their squirms
And when your back aches laugh with glee
And keep on diggin'
Till we give our foes a Wiggin'
Dig! Dig! Dig! to Victory"*



Front cover from a Dig for Victory leaflet. (D113/22)



Advert from Local Newspaper