

Changes in diet following the end WW1 here in Norfolk

In 1918 following the end of the WW1 the country was in a state of turmoil. Here in the parishes of Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf and the surrounding villages the residents found that there was a great shortage of food. Bread was baked at home, vegetables grow in gardens. Residents also kept their own pigs, rabbits and chickens. Men would shoot wild fowl and caught fish from the nearby rivers. Folk would go to the nearest farm for milk. All this helped to feed the families.



Whilst previously Norfolk was a good producer of agricultural products after the war it could not meet the much needed food requirements for the people of Britain, so wives, mothers and sisters were called upon across Norfolk to work on the land sowing crops, hoeing, harvesting, milking and working in the dairy. Special recipes appeared in the local press to help housewives to make the most of their weekly allowance of food and the Royal Horticultural Society issued advice on “how to supply your larder from your garden”.

Of interest it is worth noting that at Norwich Castle Museum two Thrift and Economy exhibitions were held in 1917 and 1918 to help the public cope with rations. Weekend cookery demonstrations instructed the public on the use of non-meat sources of protein, showed how to cook without meat, e.g. how to make carrot marmalade, cheese and meat saver, and cakes without eggs. 38,558 visitors and 4340 school children attended the 1917 exhibition.

There were no benefit payments as such from 1914 to 1918 but a wife with would receive 12s 6d and if there were children it went up according to the number of children so a wife with four children would expect to get twenty-five shillings a week.

Although these were extremely difficult times in our three villages research showed how innovative residents could be.




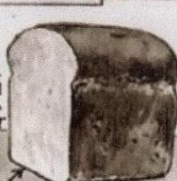

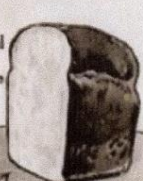
Rationing was not formally brought in until 1918 although some voluntary rationing had been tried prior to this date and food prices had been controlled. People had started to stock pile items which made matters worse so in 1918 ration books were introduced.



Fruit picking on the Gearey Farm in Norfolk.
<http://www.ludhamarchive.org.uk/gearey.htm>

When researching the rest of the country, it was found that in the North of England life was well off with plenty of work with up to 50% of wages going on food. Cooking in those days was done on ranges with absolutely nothing going to waste. In the larder you would find some items that you still find in our larders today such as Oxo, Birds custard, butter, margarine and corned beef. A favourite dish was a savoury roly poly comprising of bacon, onions and potatoes but as history later shows all that drastically changed.

What foods were rationed during the war?

<p>Sugar is RATIONED</p>  <p>½ lb Weekly for an Adult or Child.</p>	<p>Tea</p>  <p>Use Tea with care Use Coffee and Cocoa more freely than Tea.</p>	<p>Butter and Margarine are RATIONED.</p>  <p>4ozs for an Adult or Child Weekly Ration.</p>
<p>Bread for Men on ordinary industrial or other manual work 7 lbs per head per week</p>  <p>1 lb Daily Ration</p>	<p>Use Potatoes freely.</p> 	<p>Bread for Women on ordinary industrial work or in domestic service 4 lbs per head per week</p>  <p>9ozs. Daily Ration.</p>