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**Rationing**

I would like to comment here on how severe wartime rationing was. At the very start ration books were issued to everyone, and included coupons (or units) for all foodstuffs - including coffee, tea and milk, and there were also coupons for clothes.

Each person was allowed weekly amounts, such as two ounces of cheese, two ounces of lard, two ounces of margarine, butter only on occasions, one egg - but you could get powdered milk and powdered egg. Meat was rationed by units, which were equal to two ounces, and this had to be taken whatever was on offer. Sweets, sugar, flour, bread and sometimes cakes could be obtained by submitting coupons, but you could only get them from certain shops, which would mean queuing. It was better if you had a big family, then the chances of concocting a meal was easier. Apples, pears and tomatoes were often available (in season), but such things as bananas, oranges and lemons were not.

Everyone was on the look out for extras. You could sometimes pick up garden produce from friends, and occasionally local farmers would have sales, which provided potatoes, turnips, carrots and onions. You would get to know about these sales by word of mouth, and it would sometimes be a very long tiring journey, carrying the heavy vegetables home, but it was worth it.

**Special offers**

There were other offers, if you were fortunate enough to get to know about them. I remember one in particular, it was a trader in Rotherham, a very popular local butcher come fruit trader, who always had a good supply of green vegetables and potatoes. His name was Sammy Moreton, well known to all sections of the community including the police!

In later years he provided entertainment on Sunday afternoons with all-in wrestling shows in Rotherham. Well, Sammy was ever ready to help the public with his sales. Every other week he would put on offer a bargain, consisting of a rabbit, green vegetables, potatoes, an onion and a turnip. All these were put together in a carrier-bag, and the charge was two shillings and sixpence. At the same time you could get a bag of fruit for a very small price. The Rotherham public always had a good word for him, and were always on the lookout for his bargains.

I should also mention that items were introduced, to supplement rations, which we could get at most food stores. I recall items like Spam, and corned beef, which were sold in tins - and for many of us it was a regular item for the sandwiches we took to work.

You could, if you wished, visit the works canteen where, sometimes, you could get some form of meat with your chips. It was very popular with a lot of workers, but I only went occasionally because I had a problem with my diet at the time. I had a note from my doctor allowing me to get milk on a daily basis, which helped. Sometimes some of my mates would bring food in the way of pies, which would be warmed up and shared round. We were always prepared to help each other in many ways.

As the war progressed and shortages got worse, we would follow up any chance we could to get food, sometimes queuing for hours after our shift, often for very small amounts of vegetables and very occasionally fish.

However, we struggled on from day to day, later on even furniture was on coupons. It was called utility furniture, which was sparsely built and very darkly stained. When we eventually moved into our own home, most of my furniture was utility - but by this time everything was going well on the war front, and we were getting better news from all the battle-fronts. The Russians were in Berlin, and Allied armies were moving fast across Germany. The end was very near.