

Thelma Jones

I am horrified at the waste of today especially food. I do not knit or do rug making but I sometimes do darning even now. I do not grow food or cook much.

I went to school in Epsom and remembered buying buns at Riddingtons on the way to school. My Mother remembered milk being ladled into a jug but I only remember milk in bottles.

I remember going to the sea or on holiday on steam trains and also Sunday School outings with about 200 children!

My Mother used to put the clothes through the mangle. My cousins house at Camberley was gas-lights and candles until 1957!

In the war United Dairies delivered milk by horse and cart and Morleys Bakers had a one-armed man with a barrow. Parkers Coal was delivered by horse and cart for many years.

Jennie Rookledge

I was born at the outset of the Second World War and was only about six when it was all over so these are the memories of that era.

Two big things (to me) were first the taking any left over edible bits out on to the grass verge outside our house where there was a large dustbin - this was the pig pen, scraps were collected to feed the animals. The second thing was laying the copy of the Daily Telegraph flat on the floor and taking a single sheet and folding it down to make a long thin sausage shape and then jamming this down the cracks between the floorboards and round the window frames to stop the draft coming in. There was always a whistling kettle so you were aware when the water was boiling and could turn the gas off. Tea was always made in a pot using leaves and afterwards those leaves would be scattered on the compost heap. A big excitement was the coming of the chimney sweep and seeing the round brush appear out of the chimney pot before being pulled down again. The resulting soot was also scattered round the garden and on the compost heap. We had been made to move house as in Balham we were being bombed and we rented a house in Carshalton. They had been keen gardeners and the garden was lovely but we wanted to grow our own food; we rented an allotment which was very productive for us. Mum used to use Kilner jars and pickle onions and in the bottom of the larder (pantry) there were large stone jars containing pickled eggs and green beans.

It was very cold and the frozen ice patterns on the window were lovely but we only had one fire alight and we would all crouch round that and get "granny mosaic" legs. The immersion heater was switched on once a week for the obligatory 2" of water. There was a large wash for mum in the sink and putting the wet washing in a tin bath and taking it outside for me to help put it all through the mangle. In the kitchen there was a rack on ropes under the ceiling where almost dry clothes could be stacked after

coming in from the high washing line in the garden held in place by pegs bought from the gypsies.

It was a poor reflection on a man if his wife went out to work in those days so saving money was a high priority. Doors were kept shut between rooms, the radio was only allowed on if you were actually listening to it. If you needed to go shopping or whatever, then you walked. Wardrobes holding clothes were not extensive and mum used to make my clothes - day time ones and a Sunday best.

In those days milk was delivered by horse and cart and sashes the bread but I believe mum used to walk to Harringtons or Carringtons and Browns in Wallington to buy home made loaves.

We took our meals all together round an oak table and mum passed it to us through the hatch connected to the kitchen. There was often a central candle on the table saving electricity I suppose.

When milk had left its "drink by day" mum would put the residue in a muslin sheet of cloth and hang it in the larder for the whey to drip out and then there was cottage cheese with chives chopped in it from our back garden.

Dad was a clever man and very innovative. When anything was broken, he would mend it, if anything was needed, he would make it. He even taught himself to knit and made string vests to keep warm. I was lucky in as much as I was too small so got a Liberty Bodice instead.

A later memory for me was taking a bus to go the local High Street but that bus had wooden slat seats and my belt buckle got caught between the slats and I could not get off until the terminus in Wallington.

I married and had children in the sixties and milk was still delivered by horse and cart.

Reading back through this article it would seem we had a hard life but in fact we just did not. Everything in those days was just natural and "do as you would be done by" and "waste not want not" was the general attitude. There was Neighbours Association and plays etc, were put on and people seemed to be very friendly.

Whoops, I am now getting off the point and what it was you wanted to know.

PS. There was an electric fire shaped like a drainpipe with feel one end and a flat top. This was brown and metal. It is still in use in my daughter's flat and evidence that things were made to last in those days. Goblin vacuum as well!

You asked if anyone could remember what it was like living here when the houses were first built. Well, mum and dad moved into Torre Walk in 1933, I was a baby, my brother was five and my sister seven. There were only four houses in the street then, we had moved from Kennington. Mum told me it was all farm yards then and the only shop was the Tudor (No circle or Rose Hill shops then) The bath was in the kitchen and the copper in the corner of the room. You had to light a fire under it to get the water to boil, the fire was wood and coal. The coal celler (now named the cupboard) under the stairs and the coal man came and put coal in, they would pay for it each week.

The gas meter was in the kitchen and it took pennies, every so often the gas man would come and piled the pennies up, took what was due and gave back some. I remember that me my brother and sister would get a few pence out of it. When it was washing day mum had a copper stick which she used to get the clothes out with, then onto a tin. Both of which was on the top of the bath (We had a wooden top over the bath). Then the clothes went into the big sink and into the blue bag (Which was used to keep the whites looking nice) the outside to the big mangle, then on the line to dry. What a difference it is nowadays!

Most of the people came from London and everyone seemed friendly, we all kept rabbits, chickens, cats e.t.c and everyone had their own garden and grew vegetables e.t.c in them. Next door, who we used to call auntie, had three children, Edna was 1 ½ years younger than me and we used to be very good friends (Still are) we went into each others houses and when one of us got something like measles e.t.c we both got it.

Then the war came.

Dad went into the Navy, he was in the reserves so was one of the first to go. I had to block all the holes up in case poison bombs were used and everyone was given gas masks, which we had to carry around everywhere. Everything was rationed, sugar, tea, meat, soap, fruit e.t.c. The milk man and baker came round on a horse and cart. I was eight and went to Winchcombe which was a girls school, then we spent most of the time down in the shelters. It wasn't very nice down there, underground. There was a bucket and a curtain at the back in case you needed it, I never had to use it thank god. Then when it was all clear we went back to school until the sirens went off again. We used to sing songs and do tables down in the shelter. When it was bedtime we had to run and if a plane was over head lay down. We used to find alot of shrapnel around, luckily we were all safe. As I said with the food rationing I remember one person would put in sugar, another flour, another bread then make a bread pudding which the neighbours shared.

My mum and neighbours were in the W.V.S and walked about during the raids in their tin hats. When the bomb fell on Russian Walk the people got out and went to Tweedale School where mum and Mrs C Hepett gave them tea and cocoa. Me and Edna had to sit under the big kitchen table until the all clear went. We had an andorson shelter in the back garden where we slept. It had two benches in it and mum sat in the middle on a deck chair, she had a bag with her rent book ect and another of bits and pieces. Also she had a bottle of water and sandwiches in case it was going to be a long night. A warder went round the street and used to pop his head in our shelter to see if we were alright.

Winnie my sister went to work, we all started work at fourteen then, at Lines Brother making ammunition. Len my brother was in the home guard. I was thirteen when the war ended. We were lucky ones, we had the front room ceiling down in one raid, and dad came home safe. We still had rationing for years after but that's it.

Then/

~~Joyce Manser~~

~~Newby Cole~~

P.S Still live in the same house after all this time. Married with two children,

*J. Cole.*

Mandi Suheimat

I grew up in the '50s on a farm in North Devon. Mum used to knit some of our jumpers and cardigans. She used to sew - curtains, clothes - patches on trousers, on elbow or jackets. Mum used to darn our socks and again elbows on cardigans, jumpers. Sheets worn out used to be turned middle to sides and have a seam in the middle of the sheet. Any worn-out cotton clothes used to use for washing floors and cleaning in general. Very often Dad's underpants would be used for washing the floors!

Knitted clothes used to be unpicked and the wool used again, to knit another piece of clothing. Shoes used to be mended at home with soles and heels bought from the cobblers or iron mongers (even odd bits of leather were used). Granddad did more of those things than Dad.

We used to keep chickens and Dad used to kill one for our supper, pluck the feathers and a few weeks after Mum had sterilized the feathers in the oven, they would go into a pillow!

Mary Bates (nee Methuen)

I was born in 1927. From the age of 2½ I was brought up by my grandmother (born in 1869). My early memories include the following.

I remember the gas lighter man, with a long pole to light the street lamps. I must have been very young then, about 4 - the lamps became lit automatically years before the war in 1939.

My grandmother used Lifebuoy sops, Sunlight soap for washing clothes (a yellow bar - sometimes she grated it), Ricketts blue bag (useful for bee stings). Starch was a

powder mixed with water. She used Sloans liniment for her lumbago and Beechams fever pills. Her mangle was a large cumbersome thing with a handle at the side, wooden rollers, a zinc bath was below to catch the water. For ironing Gran had two flat irons, one on the gas, one in use, a padded holder to hold them and a cloth to wipe the base each time they were changed over.

In winter we had a fire in one room only, but in the early morning before the fire was lit, Gran lit the gas oven and left the door open to heat the kitchen.

Lighting was by gas mantles, they made a hissing noise, especially when lit with a match.

The coal was delivered by a man with a horse and cart. Gran watched out for any manure, which she put on her roses.

The milkman came twice a day - around 7.30 in the morning and again at lunch time. He was always grumpy in the early morning! The postman delivered 3 times a day and there were 3 collections from the pillar box.

The milkman had a push cart filled with glass bottles and handles at the back for him to push by. Later a young milkman had a larger cart with an electric motor attached - but he still had to walk beside it.

There was no fridge, so in heat waves keeping food was a problem. Milk was "scalded" - brought just to boiling point then cooled. Meat was wiped with a vinegar to delay it going bad. But it helped that the butcher's boy called 2 or 3 times a week with his bicycle, taking the order and returning a couple of hours later with the meat. But Sundays there were no deliveries, no shops open, strict observance of the Lords Day.

I often walked to the shops with Gran. The market in winter evenings had a lamp at each stall, which hissed (probably paraffin).

Socks and stockings were always darned. Needles with black and white cotton were kept threaded ready for emergency repairs, stuck in an old kettle holder hung on the mantelpiece.

Gran was terrified of electricity, that's why she didn't have an electric iron. She had no vacuum cleaner, used a dustpan and brush to clean the carpets, spreading old tea leaves to lay the dust. When Daddy changed the light bulbs (we got electricity installed when I was 5 - but only for lighting, no points) Gran stood beside him urging him to be careful, ready to catch him if he was electrocuted.

My father took my sister and me for one weeks' holiday a year (August bank holiday when the engineering works were closed). We went to Ramsgate and travelled by steam train. We always booked seats with our back to the engine so we didn't get troubled by smuts coming in the window. At the station there were always several young boys with hand-made carts willing to cart our suitcase to the boarding house for a few pennies.