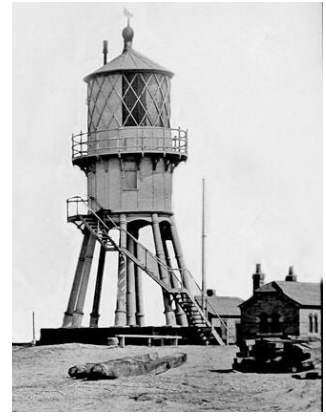


Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society Newsletter

October 2023

Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



Food Rationing

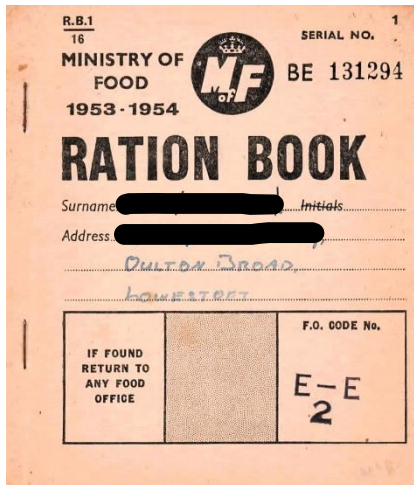
by Ron Ashman

In recent years panic buying has caused shortages on the shelves of supermarkets. At the start of the Covid pandemic many items were bulk purchased which resulted in some items being in short supply.

Rationing is not new, as during the last war many items came under this heading. Having been born at the end of the war, I do not remember it at all, which is surprising as it did not end completely until 1954.

During January 1940 the Government introduced food rationing to ensure that the population received a fair share of food available at the time of national shortage. Every man, woman and child was issued with a ration book by the Ministry of Food.

On the 29 September 1939 a register was compiled of the population of the country which was used to issue ration books. This Register is very useful to those researching family history, or to historians in general, as the 1931 census was destroyed by fire during the war and a census was not taken in 1941.

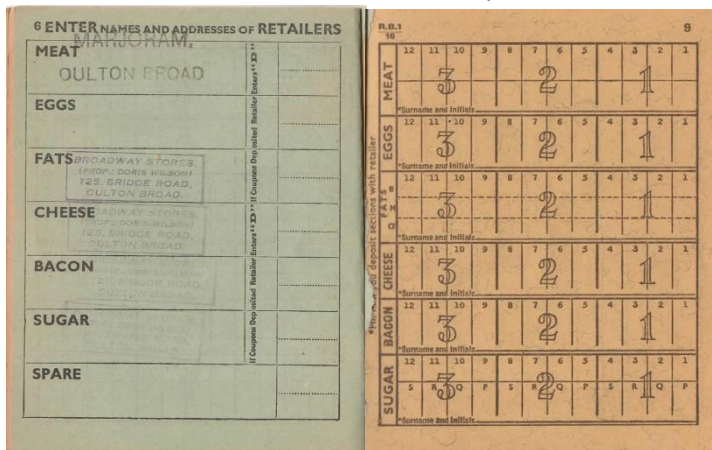


Ration Book coupons were required to purchase items such as sugar, meat, fats, bacon and cheese. However, housewives had to register with particular shops.

Unfortunately long queues became a common sight as shortages increased. Having waited in a queue for some time, it was not uncommon on reaching the front of the queue to find the items wanted had all been sold. Although fruit and vegetables were not rationed during the war years they were often in short supply. As a result the government introduced the scheme 'Dig for Victory', where people were encouraged to grow more vegetables at home and many public parks were turned into gardens.

There were of course ways of obtaining rationed items without coupons. These could be obtained from shopkeepers 'under the counter' supplies or from petty criminals known as 'Spivs', who supplied black market goods at inflated prices.

The owner of this Ration Book, which was issued in 1953 near the end of rationing, registered with Marjoram's butchers in Oulton Broad for her meat ration and Broadway Stores, also in Oulton Broad, for the other items. The numbered coupons on the right hand page would be removed when the goods were purchased.



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Rationing started in September 1939 for petrol, with food items following in January 1940.

September 1939	Petrol (motor spirit)
January 1940	Butter, bacon, ham and sugar rationed
March 1940	Meat rationed
July 1940	Tea and margarine rationed
May 1941	Cheese rationed
June 1941	Eggs and Clothes rationed
July 1941	Coal rationed (because some coal miners were called up for military service)
December 1941	Points rationing introduced for canned and processed foods (<i>see note below</i>)
February 1942	Soap rationed
July 1942	Chocolate and sweets rationed
1943	Sausages rationed
July 1946	Bread rationed (derationed in 1948)
May 1949	Clothes rationing abolished
May 1950	Points rationing abolished
September 1950	Soap derationed
October 1952	Tea derationed
February 1953	Sweets rationing abolished
May 1954	Cheese and fats derationed
July 1954	Meat, bacon and ham derationed, marking the end of food rationing

Note

Points rationing was applied to tinned goods, cereals, biscuits and dried fruit. Points were allocated to these goods and number required changed according to demand and availability.

However, priority allowances of milk and eggs were given to those in most need, which included expectant mothers and children.

Allowances fluctuated throughout the war, but on average one adult's weekly ration was

- Bacon & Ham: 4 oz
- Other meat (value of 1 shilling and 2 pence): Equivalent to 2 chops
- Butter: 2 oz
- Cheese: 2 oz
- Margarine: 4 oz
- Cooking fat: 4 oz
- Milk: 3 pints
- Sugar: 8 oz
- Preserves: 1 lb every 2 months
- Tea: 2 oz
- Eggs: 1 fresh egg (plus allowance of dried egg)
- Sweets: 12 oz every 4 weeks

Ration books were issued with different coloured covers:-

Buff coloured; most adults had these.

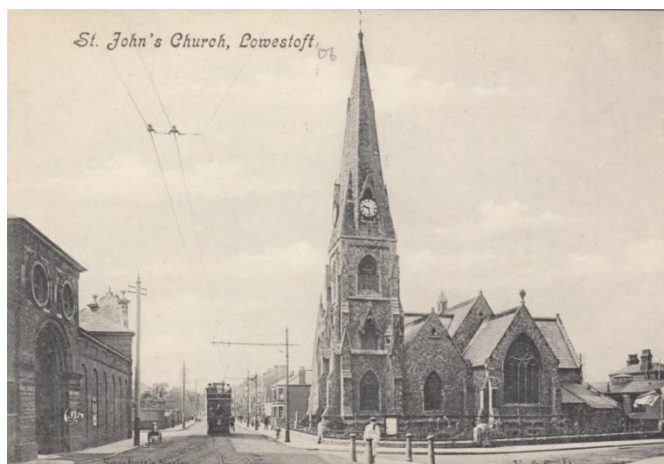
Green coloured; issued to pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under 5 years old. They had first choice of fruit, a daily pint of milk and a double supply of eggs.

Blue coloured; issued for children between 5 and 16 years of age. It was felt important that children had fruit, the full meat ratio and half a pint of milk a day.

The tale of three lost clocks

by Ron Ashman

1 – the church clock



St John's Church was built in 1853.

In 1887 a clock was installed in the spire to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

The money for the clock was raised from public subscription.

In 1978 the church was demolished and a request was made by the Society Chairman at that time that the clock be given to the Society or Museum to be held until another suitable site was found for it. Unfortunately it was sold to a clock collector. However, we did receive for the

Museum the brass foundation plate and the coins found behind it, together with the gilded weather cock from the spire.

On the Suffolk Churches website it records that .. "during demolition bits of the church were sold to interested spectators and collectors". One of the former members of the congregation was Benjamin Britten the composer. His mother was the organist and he may have played there himself. The organ was restored and moved to St Andrew's church in Gorleston.

2 – the railway station clock

When my wife Irene was Society Secretary we received a email from a gentleman in Sydney Australia saying he had purchased a large LNER railway station clock at an auction in Sydney, and could we provide him with a photograph of it in situ.



The clock had the number 3776 on its dial and subsequent inquiries by the owner revealed that it was from Lowestoft station and it was removed in July 1987 when the concourse roof was removed. (The clock should have been returned following the completion of the roof removal.)

This picture show the station, with the concourse roof, in the 1960's and the holidaymakers waiting for their train home. I would expect the current railway company would like to see the station that full today.



3 – the hotel bar clock



What happened to the Suffolk Hotel bar clock?.

This story as told by a gentleman who was working as a barman when the clock disappeared goes as follows.

A customer told the barman that the clock needed winding, he then climbed onto a couch, removed the clock from the wall and walked out of the bar. Nobody stopped him as they thought he was just removing it to wind it up. It was not seen again.

The Suffolk Hotel stood on the corner of Denmark Road and London Road North. When it was demolished in 1972 the present building was

constructed with the ground floor being Liptons Supermarket. When Liptons closed, one part of the building it occupied became a McDonald's restaurant and the other part an Argos store. Both of which are no longer there.

In conclusion: I know that the piece about the first clock is true. The second clock I have not been able to find evidence to say it is true, or could it be a good replica. The third piece came from a local company's Newsletter. (the company is no longer trading in Lowestoft).

Lowestoft Museum update

It has been another good year at Lowestoft Museum with numbers on 1st October standing at 8,950, well up on last year. Comments in the Visitors Book as well as conversations with Stewards have also been very encouraging and at the end of the day it is the work of the Stewards who make the Museum so successful. One visitor from Rochester in Kent says they now have a state of the art Museum in the town which comparatively few local people visit. She paid tribute to our Museum by congratulating all involved presenting such interesting displays and making it so people can understand exactly what they are looking at and it is all free as well.

Bert Collyers exhibition of photographs of Lowestoft as it used to be is again providing much interest. The black and white photographs really having an impact on the visitor and this is always a popular subject.

One of the fifty or so donations made this year was a group of sepia post cards of Oulton Broad and these will join other items in the Turner Room for next season with the general theme being Oulton Broad as we move items around from other areas.

Other objects given to the Museum this season include two greyware Romano British jars from Pakefield which will be displayed next season along with a jet counter.

Other items include a large doll, one possibly used in a shop window display, a framed glazed print of Lowestoft, a Lowestoft porcelain rim and a framed oil painting of Lowestoft fishing vessels.

Additional items include a briar type smoking pipe and a cast iron letter stamp for marking wooden items.

If you have any articles that you would like published in this Newsletter, please contact the editors at a meeting or send your piece to email address LALHS@btinternet.com.

Items do not have to be typed, they can be hand written and do not have to be very long.

If you wish your name can be attributed to the article, or it can be left out.

Have you been to any interesting place or building in this country that might be of interest to other members that you could write about. Could you write a review of an historical book you have read. Or could you write about childhood memories. (e.g shops, wash days or school days).