

"WINTER WARMERS"

MEMORIES OF COPING WITH WINTERS PAST



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know the
Surest
PROTECTION
of
Health"

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A BOOK OF STORIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

An Age Exchange Publication

WINTER WARMERS

memories of coping with winter



*George Lane, Catford, in the early years of the century,
when this was countryside.*

Edited by Rib Davis

Executive Editor Pam Schweitzer

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The Reminiscence Centre, 11 Blackheath Village,
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CONTENTS

1.	<i>Potato Peelings on the Fire</i>	8
2.	<i>Stone Bottles and Four in a Bed</i>	17
3.	<i>Spotted Dick and Cocoa</i>	22
4.	<i>Woollen Socks and No Fingers</i>	29
5.	<i>Coughs and Camphorated Oil</i>	38
6.	<i>Out in the Cold</i>	44
7.	<i>Pea-Soupers</i>	52
8.	<i>Snowmen and Skating</i>	58
9.	<i>Remember, Remember...</i>	64
10.	<i>See in the New...</i>	70
11.	<i>Screens and Magic Lanterns</i>	73
12.	<i>Shivering in School</i>	76
13.	<i>Winter Work</i>	82
14.	<i>Age Exchange Book List</i>	91



INTRODUCTION

This book, the companion volume to our earlier book *All Our Christmases*, focuses on a basic element of life in this chilly island: how people here have coped with winter. Many things have changed. Now the single open fire or stove has mostly given way to central heating; double glazing keeps out the drafts and the days of the icy outside toilet have almost passed. The availability of cheap mass-produced clothing along with the general rise in income has meant that most people can now afford adequate clothes for winter. With home, school and work place no longer as cold as they used to be, there is no longer the necessity for winter diet to be dominated by the traditional winter foods - the suet puddings and endless stews.

The changes in how we cope with winter have, then, been enormous. At the same time, though, we might notice that there are still people for whom things seem hardly to have changed at all: still there are thousands who can only afford to heat one room, who go to the local library to keep warm and who struggle to find enough nourishing hot food to eat.

Winter Warmers calls upon material from dozens of tape-recorded interviews carried out in South and East London, along with a few written pieces. Many of the reminiscences are from the inter-war years, but there are also post-war memories, particularly of immigrants from Asia and the Caribbean. For the great majority of these new arrivals, snow, ice, biting winds and freezing pipes were all totally new and not entirely welcome experiences. Many of these immigrants also had to learn English; we are particularly grateful to those who chose to express themselves to us in English despite it not being their first language.

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A DROP INSTEAD OF A SPOONFUL

Rib Davis, Editor

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to all those who were kind enough to contribute their reminiscences, whether or not it was ultimately possible to include them in this publication. In addition we very much appreciate the co-operation we have received from the staff of the Calabash Centre in Lewisham, Belvedere Youth and Community Centre and the "Hamari Kahani" (Our Story") Project run as part of the Ekta Project for Asian Elders.

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Lewisham Town Centre in the early years of the century.

Age Exchange Theatre Trust gratefully acknowledges financial support with this publication from the Department of Health and Help the Aged.

Potato Peelings on the Fire

Mary Gibson:

My mother would send the boys with this little wooden cart - she'd send them over to the city where the offices were and where the charladies had cleaned the fireplaces out and thrown the ashes and cinders away.

My brothers had to pick up the cinders and fill the cart and fetch it home so that we could have a fire. And us girls used to sit with wet newspaper and Mum would peel all the potatoes and turnips and every-

thing and we had to wrap it up in parcels in damp newspaper and that was put on the fire in between a couple of lumps of coal and a bit of coke on top because that kept the fire in.

Everything went on the fire - it doesn't matter what it was, if that would burn it went on it.

Bill Gibson:

There was one important means of heating: that was the roads. The roads was made of tar blocks, we used to call them, 'tarry blocks'. When they dug the roads up there was a supply of these blocks, they were just ordinary wooden blocks soaked in tar or whatever to preserve them.

If we knew that a road was being dug up we was down there with a barrow and we'd get some of the worse ones, didn't we? We bunged them straight on the fire, it used to keep the fire going.

Jean Plastow:

My mother would get up at 5.30 and light the old black copper in the kitchen - this being the only form of warmth in the house. To wash, a kettle would have to be put on the gas stove. Bath day was Thursday only and the water was pumped up from the kitchen via the back boiler. Our family never wanted to venture out of the kitchen during winter.

Margaret Kippin:

We didn't keep really warm. It was alright if you were sitting round the fire, but then you'd have a cold back. To keep the draughts out we had heavy curtains or material stuffed in a sausage shape or even a filled stocking. My daughter, when she was quite old, she said, "You know Mum, it used to frighten me," because when I said, "Keep the draught out," she thought it was some awful big thing that might come in to the room.

Hilda Kennedy:

At this particular time I worked in a paint factory. And you started at half seven in the morning. My mother never got me up for work; my dad would call

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me, bang, bang, bang - "Get up!" and that was it, off you go. So we got up. Now the lavatory was in the back yard and all the water was frozen, there was no water coming out of the taps. Just imagine, the scullery was a stone floor, it wasn't like now when you sit in the kitchen and it's lovely. There was the white sink and just an ordinary stone floor and it was freezing. Now I had to go in the garden when it was thick snow. I used to scoop up the snow in a bowl; I put the bowl on the cooker to have a wash in the morning, that's all you could do. Just snow water - and I'd go to work with nothing.

You'd come home freezing cold. Well there was the fire, but there was so many of us, seven or eight of us, and you all sat round the fire in a circle. There was no television and the radio was on: my dad was miserable. Don't speak or he used to get up and hit you. If he was out in the pub we used to sit and play film stars, all the family. My mum used to sit and laugh. We'd start at the beginning with such-and-such and we'd all sit and play or we'd all be talking. You could say, "Something beginning with R H, a woman," (that'd be Rita Hayworth) and they'd all be thinking and shouting out things, and acting out things. If my dad was in we couldn't do that, because my dad was hearing the radio and that was it.

Mary Sawyer:

In the winter evenings we used to play round the table - Snakes and Ladders, Lotto, Ludo. They were board games; they lasted us years. Because they started with my elder sister and went on right down to my younger sister, and there were all those years in between when they were always kept and always put away safely so that you didn't have to keep buying them. And we used to have paper and crayons, and books which we could paint on. And Mum and Dad were always there as well.

Bill Winter:

You went to the local baths once a week. I believe it used to be thrupence then. You used to have hot water to suit your needs. The attendant running out the back had a little spanner to turn the watercocks on. If you sat in the bath and it got coolish you'd shout, "More hot water in number 5!" You were issued with a towel if you needed a towel but a lot of people took their own stuff.

I can remember going to the old outside toilet at friends' houses. Some of those toilets were at the end of the garden and people who had gardens running down onto those, they'd be situated in the same area so you might have toilets back to back. But the pipe would run up the



*John's Place, off Lewisham High Street,
in a winter of the 1930s. It has since been demolished.*

garden under the soil. But of course, they used to freeze up. If it did freeze you might have to carry water from the house in a bucket.

Elsie House:

We used to go out 'wooding' and bring home bags of wood to keep the fire. We'd go round the houses where they were building, round the new houses, where they'd sawn up ends, just the ends. All the pieces. We used to take our bags and bring it home for the fire. And we'd go round to the woods and get the twigs. Sometimes they was a bit green, they wouldn't burn very well, had to be dried off.

We bathed in front of the fire in a big tin bath. Used to keep topping it up with water, hot water. "Who's going to be first?" We all used to fight for who was going to be first because they had the cleanest water. We always used to take it in turns in the bath. It used to look lovely. I can see my young brothers and sisters now, standing there with their faces shining where they had been washed. They really shone.

We used to make our own shows, because there was eight of us. We used to black our faces, put a sheet on, wrapped round. We used to be the coal black mammy, do anything like that. I might pretend I'm dead or a ghost or I'd be Maid Marion. My mum used play Ludo with us and Snakes and Ladders. We didn't have no toys, only little toys.

Pat Hanmore:

When I was a young child in the 20s and living on the island of Bryher in the Scilly Isles, I especially remember one lady, Clementine - Clem to us children. She lived in a little cottage which had a ditch all round it, which we children used to jump into. However, she was a kind lady and always welcomed children into her cottage where I well recall the lovely warm fire she kept in her grate. To keep her fire going during the winter and herself warm

Clem would gather sticks and branches from the gorse bushes during the autumn. These she would bundle up and stack all round the home, right up the sides of her cottage.

Barbara McKenzie:

About 1943 I lived in a rat-infested basement below a shop, and next to a cake shop - hence the rats. We kept warm by wearing all outer clothing, such as duffle coats, indoors, and even sleeping in them. We had no heating. I can't remember thinking how awful it was - it was just a way of life.

Joyce Milan:

It was 1946 or '47 - it was one of the worst winters we'd ever had. We tried to light the fire, and it used to come back and choke us. The room was billowing with smoke. We never really got heat out of it - it was just a big smoky mess. The place was freezing! The cold there was unbearable. And all the pipes froze up, and then all night long, it was drip, drip, drip, drip. And we didn't know what to do, so we put a bucket down on the floor, and a bowl on the

Picture Post, January 11, 1947



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floor. And you couldn't get to sleep, it was like Chinese torture! Plunk, plunk, plunk all night long! And then I said to my husband, "Do you reckon they know upstairs that the pipes have burst?" He said, "Nobody's been down to say to us that there's water coming through". So he went upstairs and said, "Have you got any problems with your water?" "No, we don't think so!" So they opened one of the room doors, and the water poured out!! They were sick at the end - they didn't know that the place was flooded!

It was terrible, the water that all gushed through there. It came right down into our flat because we were on the ground floor, you see..And then after a while it dried out, and the spring came, and we started getting this awful smell. And the council came up and looked, and the only room we'd got a carpet in - that was our utility carpet - was in our front room, our big main lounge. And they took the floorboards up, and it was full of rot underneath. It stunk.

Avil Cupid:

I am from Saint Vincent. In Saint Vincent you always hear of winters in England, but I couldn't imagine what it would really be like, though we used to have postcards and Christmas cards from England, and you'd see pictures of snow - snow covered cars, and snow covered trees. But it was quite an experience to actually feel and see.

At that time we had a paraffin heater, and it's a wonder that there wasn't a disaster, because sometimes, before we'd actually light the heater, we'd turn up the wick, so that it would get soaked. And many times, some minutes after we have turned up the wick and we'd attempt to light it, it would almost blow up! Many times we had to shy away from it in order not to get burned, because it would go up in flames!

Chaman Kaur Mandra:

I could not cook dahl because it takes a long time - too much gas! That's what the landlord said. But when he used to cook meat, he cooked it for a long time. So on those days when he used to cook meat, I used to cook dahl as well. And I'd say, "You took that long!" Because you had to put money in the meter, and half-way through when the dahl was cooking, the meter would run out. It was the landlord's meter.

Singh Sanghar:

When I came to this country from Africa it was winter. I was very cold - shivering. We didn't have heavy clothes at that time. As we arrived in camp, at the same time we were given clothing, because otherwise you didn't have anything to cover yourself up. The army provided us with everything: clothing, food, everything. And the shed - the camp - was heated already, so in the sheds you didn't feel cold. They provided us with shelter there for a couple of months.

Manmohan Kaur Sandhu:

When I first came there was the sunlight, and I thought I could go outside and sit in the sun, but the sun had no heat in it. I saw the sun and I would let the sunlight shine down on me, but I was shivery. So I sat indoors and there was a small fire burning. There was no central heating, so I sat by that coal fire to warm myself. That sun had no heat in it.

Balder Jeet Kaur Ram:

We used to make cups of tea on a gas fire, and you had to be careful that your hands didn't get burnt. We didn't quite know actually how to use these things. After my husband left for work, I would not do anything - I would be so frightened, that I would just make the

chipatis and keep them on the side, and I'd make a pot of peas and keep the pot on the small heater. But I would not use the gas fire, because I did not know what was going to happen. And because the house had a glass door and windows we were very frightened of burglars, because in India we have walls, but here it is mostly glass.

Edith Williams:

Over there you no scared and you sit down on your veranda of your house till anytime.

When I first came I saw snow come on the ground and I never know what it was. Never see snow. From a bairn I never see snow, really don't know what it was till when I take it up in my hand and I go and show somebody and they tell me snow. I did spread out a piece of clothes out there and then go and take it up and the cloth that we see was stiff! I don't go out again. I scared. Until now I don't go out in the snow. I stay in the house.

Maureen Knott's RABBIT STEW

Ingredients

1 Rabbit - skinned	1oz dripping
2 Carrots - sliced	1oz flour
1 Turnip - diced	1 Pint water
1 Medium onion - sliced	Salt & Pepper

Method

Wash and joint rabbit and dry well.
Melt dripping in large pan and fry joints slowly until brown.
Remove from pan.
Slice onion and fry.
Add flour and fry slowly until pale brown.
Stir in water and bring to boil.
Return joints to pan, add salt and pepper and simmer for 1¹/₂ to 2 hours, until joints are tender, adding diced vegetables for the last ³/₄ hour.

Stone Bottles and Four in a Bed

Mary Gibson:

What I remember most of all was the iciness of the bedrooms, 'cause you were all huddled round the fire, 'cause you only had one room to all sit in. When it was time to go up to bed, the iciness at the top of the stairs used to hit you. But although you got into an icy bed, you had each other to cuddle up to and then if you couldn't get warm you'd change places - "You come over here and let me go in the warm spot!" The warm spot was in the middle and if the eldest sister wasn't home by the time we went to bed, we couldn't wait for her to come so that the one who was in the middle got the warmth from both sides. We might shout down the stairs, "Mum, we're cold!" and then she'd fetch up any old coats that were hanging in the hall. It might be the one Dad was working in to put across your feet, because there just wasn't enough blankets to say, "Can we have another blanket?" with six to a bed, you know. So if you had two blankets, that's as much as you had and if you was lucky they might have what we would call an eiderdown and sometimes she'd take it off the boys' bed and put it on you till they come in. But it was the absolute iciness of getting into that cold bed, getting out in the morning and putting your feet on the cold lino - oh no, dreadful!

I remember having a stone bottle. It was long and it had a round handle at one end and a screw top. It stayed hot a long time, it stayed hotter than a rubber hot water bottle does.

Lil Patrick:

The coat was used as a blanket, an old army overcoat. We had two. I don't know where my dad had got them from but they went on over the top of everything else.

They were used as you would use a blanket or duvet today. But that's what we had. It was the damp of the houses that was really as much trouble as the draughts wasn't it? You know, it's really indescribable. You can't make people understand.

Margaret Kippin:

When I used to go and stay with my granny in the country, she used to put the brick in the oven, and wrap it in flannel and use it to warm the bed. And if you had a stone hot water bottle sometimes - ginger beer used to come in stone bottles - that was lovely when you got in to bed, but halfway through the night it was freezing cold. And you'd suddenly hear - bang, bang, bang! - people kicking their hot water bottles out of the bed!

I can remember later on, when I went in service, the room I had was right at the top of a building, and we had to get up very early in the morning, and we had to break the ice on the top of the water jug, before you could wash!

Joyce Milan:

My bedroom windows had ice on the inside, and I used to be able to scrape it off with my thumbnail, all different shapes. The ice used to form patterns on the inside of the window. I remember getting into bed at night and having to breathe like mad down the bedclothes. My mother used to say, "Keep breathing down the bedclothes," because it was so icy cold. I had a stone hot water bottle, which went cold very quickly, and I really was very, very cold at nights. Terribly cold. Some nights I couldn't sleep because of it.

I was an only child, so I didn't have any brothers and sisters. I often crept in my mum's room, and I remember her saying to my dad on the other side of the

bed, "Oh, she's frozen!" you know, because I was, I was absolutely frozen, so cold I couldn't go to sleep. And the moment I got in the side of my mum I was asleep. And I'm afraid that practice went on for a long while, because I just had to go near somebody to get warm. The mornings were all cold. You'd put your feet out onto cold lino. I can remember my toes always being so solid with cold that I couldn't feel them all through the morning at school.

Doreen Davis:

My gran used to keep her flat irons on the range all day and then when we were going up to bed as children, she'd rush up and she'd iron the sheets so they were warm before we got into bed. Or she'd put a brick in the oven, wrap it up in an old towel and put it in the bed for us to put our feet on. Because it was so cold. You look back fondly at these houses - I mean I would love to have stayed in my old house rather than have to come up here to this new one - but when you really think about it, it's nostalgia you're looking at. Because they were cold.

Elsie House:

We used to line up against the fireguard. We used to pull our nighties up and warm our bums. When we were all nice and warm we used to run upstairs, holding our bums, to keep the warmth in and jump in bed. We did, I can see it now. It was never up to bed, we called it up the wooden hill. We had four in a bed. There was eight of us. Two at the top and two at the bottom. She used to come round and tuck us in every night. Took a hot brick to bed with us. We had a hot brick, all wrapped up in a piece of thick blanket because it was ever so hot. Then she used to count our heads to see if we was all there - one, two, three, four. Never got in a cold bed - the brick used to keep warm right until the next morning.

We had flannelette sheets in the winter. They were very warm. The blankets were Witney blankets, pure wool. An eiderdown or heavy quilt, that was warm.

Four of you in a bed you wouldn't be cold, would you? Kept one another warm. It was a lot of fun. It was homely. Lay there talking. You were close. Children today have got their own bedroom, haven't they, but I think it's dull.

LORD WOOLTON PIE

Ingredients

<i>1 small cauliflower - broken into small florets</i>	<i>1 small bunch spring onions - chopped</i>
<i>4oz thinly sliced carrots</i>	<i>4 tbls chopped parsley</i>
<i>8oz diced potatoes</i>	<i>2 level tbls marmite</i>
<i>4oz diced turnip</i>	<i>2 level tbls cornflour</i>
	<i>Salt & pepper</i>

Pastry

*8oz white flour
8oz wholemeal flour
8oz block margarine
3 fl oz water*

Method

*Blanch all vegetables in boiling salted water for 5 minutes
Drain, reserving $\frac{1}{3}$ pint water
Blend marmite and cornflour with vegetable water and cook to a thick gravy.
Put vegetables and chopped parsley into a $2\frac{1}{2}$ pint pie dish, season and pour over gravy.
Make pastry and cover pie dish.
Bake in oven: $190^{\circ}\text{C}/375^{\circ}\text{F}$*

Gas Mark 5 for about 40 minutes until golden brown.

Penny Cheeseman:

We slept three in a bed right till I left home at the age of nineteen. And you had white sheets on the bed and then a thin blanket and coats and coats and coats and coats piled on top of that. And I can remember waking up in the morning and laying there and just going "Hhhhhh," pretending I was smoking because your breath was so cold, it just looked like smoke. So I learnt to smoke at an early age!

Bill Winter:

At night a lot of people used to put more blankets on the bed, or coats. Some people didn't have the blankets, they used to put big top coats over. We had blankets but then if it got very cold you would go out and pop the overcoat over the bed. We finished up with one big double bed and two single beds. And the two oldest ones had the big double bed. I being the second eldest was in with my brother. But then you see if it got cold the youngest one used to come in as well, because you know, a number of bodies kept one another warm.

Kitty Finch:

1944, there used to be eight of us in one bed, because we didn't have no furniture - nothing, we were bombed out from the beginning of the war. We had this big bed given to us - I don't remember who gave it to us - and there were eight of us; seven children and my mum in the bed. We had this big hole in the wall where we were bombed in this house that they gave us - it had already been bombed. There was a big hole in the wall, and we could walk in through to the other room. There was nothing in that other room.

There was a little tiny iron fire, a coal fire but we didn't have much of that, because my mum didn't have the money. I can remember blankets being on the bed, but I can also remember coats being put on there, too.

Spotted Dick and Cocoa

Elsie House:

We always had an open fire. My mum always had a pot of bones boiling on there. Carrots, onions, turnips, swede. Used to go and get a pennyworth of pot herbs. Used to get a lot of vegetables for a penny. She used to make all this lovely bone broth. In the oven she used to make a big rice pudding, with a lot of nutmeg on the top. We used to have that. But we lived on mostly suet pudding and dumplings, and treacle pudding made by the yard. She had a saucepan with a handle each side about two foot long. There was eight of us, ten with my mum and dad. She used to chop up the old suet pudding and pour golden syrup over it. Syrup used to keep you warm. And we lived on a lot of bread and dripping. We used to go round the bakers and get four pennyworth of bread the next day, if there was any bread over. They never sold it stale at that price. Take a pillow case round and get four pennorth. They used to give you so many loaves. Beautiful bread.

My dad had an allotment. He used to go there and say, "Some bugger's been and pinched my carrots!" It used to be us been over there pulling up his carrots. We used to eat the dirt as well. Just break the green off. We used to eat the dirt, carrots, turnips, eat turnip with the skin on. Never washed anything. We'd make a little fire and bake some potatoes under it. They used to be as black as coal and we'd eat them. Never harmed us. We used to eat the rosehips off the bushes in the winter, and hazel berries.

We used to have a dinner midday in them days and a tea. She used to make a lot of bread pudding, my mum did. That used to fill us up, bread pudding. And gingerbread, she used to make wonderful gingerbread, make it in a meat tin. Cut it all up for ten of you. And meat puddings she'd make, the size of a football.

She'd slide it off, the pudding on to the meat dish, from the cloth. It used to get on the dish and it used to pop. All the lovely meat and gravy used to come out. Beautiful meat pudding. Onions, she'd boil pounds of onions in a saucepan, with no water. They used to cook in their own juice and you'd never tasted onions like it.

They shared everything. The lady next door made me bread pudding - Mrs Crouch. I used to cry for pudding. That's my name, Pudding, my nickname, they still call me Pudding, my sisters. I used to cry for pudding. She used to make me a bread pudding all to myself, in a little dish.

Used to have a hot cup of cocoa, made with water and a spoonful of Nestles milk when we went to bed, if we didn't have the broth. We always used to have broth with a slice of toast in it and a hot cup of cocoa and a piece of toast before we went to bed. We never went to bed hungry.

Doreen Davis:

When my mum did cow heel she used to do it in milk. She used to do tripe and cow heel together with onion and carrots and that kind of stuff. And she would always sit - because the cow heel had sort of gristle, I suppose it's like a tendon or something - she would sit and



An old friend in a new dress

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chew that and both cow heel and tripe used to make me feel awful, I hated it, but I would eat the milky gravy because it was so lovely with the taste of the onions and the potatoes mashed in it. I would eat that with some bread which was good enough for me. But to have to sit at a table and... oh it was awful.

They used to have eels a lot, in a kind of a tank thing. You picked your eel out and the poor thing had its head chopped off, chop, chop, chop, into their cooking thing and your brought it home. I hated that! You could buy stewed eels hot, so that if someone was ill people gave them. And then the jellied eels were cold, they were solidified in an aspic jelly.

Liver, my mother used to try and make me have a piece of liver. I used to try and feed it to the dog under the table so I didn't eat too much of it. Liver and bacon we always had, I used to eat the bacon and then, as I say, I would have a few pieces of this terrible liver stuff and then I would feed it under the table to our dog, who would eat anything. But I never ate anything else, anything like kidneys, heart, nothing. I always had to have something completely different. Usually an egg, because we used to keep chickens so eggs was always plentiful. But I have always been a pain to my parents, I must admit.

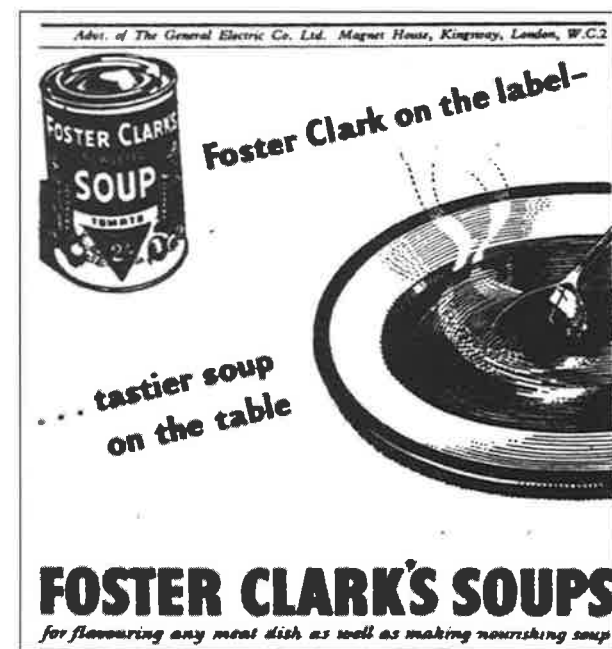
Joyce Milan:

Your parents always made you eat suet puddings. We lived on suet puddings in our house. My dad reckoned you had to have one every day to keep you going. And when my children looked thin, like I was thin - "That girl doesn't have enough pudding! She should have more puddings in her!" We ate suet pudding, steak and kidney pudding, treacle pudding... You lined the basin with suet pastry, so it's really thick and heavy. I mean you could sink if you went swimming after a suet pudding!

My dad was on the trams, and it was shift work, and my mother was always in the kitchen with a meal, no matter what time he came in - early hours of the morning, anytime. He never came in without knowing there was a hot meal there. Mum used to make spotted dick in a cloth, and wrap it up in a cloth, and put it in a saucepan of boiling water. And my dad liked what he called a 'Baby's head'. It was steak and kidney pudding with suet pastry, wrapped in a cloth and put in boiling water. And when you put it on the plate, it's like a big ball of cooked suet pudding, and then when you open it all this steak and kidney meat came out. It was very nourishing, really. Dad used to call it a baby's head.

Mary Sawyer:

You used to buy a marrow bone, you know, big - it must have been a part of the leg. And it used to be chopped up, and then that was put in the saucepan with loads and loads of vegetables. And I was a terrible one, because I used to take all the bones; I used to love g n a w i n g everything off the bone - it was like jelly on the outside - I loved that!



Lil Patrick:

My gran used to make rabbit stew, and she lived upstairs, and you could smell it cooking. And my brother and I used to sit on the bottom two stairs waiting for this rabbit stew to come down! It never failed; we always got some.

We'd sooner have bread and dripping than bread and marge, wouldn't we, so we all went for dripping, while it lasted in the pot. And I had it up till Wednesday. And Thursday, it would have to be marge.

Mary Gibson:

I hated Mondays, because when you came in from school lunchtime, you had the smell of the boiler going, with all the washing put on, and the smell of stew. And if I hated anything as a child, it was stew. And you'd walk in and you'd go, "Oh no, not stew!" And my mother's words were, "Eat it or go without. That's all we've got!" And that's stayed with me all my life. And you weren't given anything else either, not even a piece of bread.

You ate what was there or you went without. And she used to say, "If you're hungry, you'll eat it," and I used to say, "But I don't like stew, Mum!" "Then go without. We've got nothing else!" Then you went back to school with nothing in you.

Doris Stevenson:

We used to have a bacon and onion pudding which was made with suet and rolled out, then you lined it with bacon and onion and rolled it up and put it in a cloth and boiled it as if you were doing a spotted dick or a suet pudding. Actually I like it.

And another thing we used to have - not everybody liked it, but I did - was cow heel, cooked cow heel. They used to

put it into a pot with onions and carrots and boil it up, and it used to be like a clear broth. I don't think we ever used to eat the actual cow's heel but you got all the jelly and the marrow out of it, I suppose. I thought it was lovely. I had it for years. There used to be a shop in Rye Lane that we used to go to that just sold tripe and cow heel. I remember when we used to go to this offal shop. Faggots: they were very savoury, they were probably innards of animals chopped up I suppose, with spices in. They were quite spicy. Sometimes it would be faggots and sometimes it would be saveloys or sometimes, if we were very lucky, we used to go to the pie shop, Manzi's. It used to be open in the evening. We used to come past Manzi's and then across the road was this shop that did the faggots, pease-pudding and saveloys but we always used to take this basin up.

We used to take this bowl and you went into the shop and they'd put your pease-pudding in one and in the other bowl they'd put your faggots. Then you took a cloth and you wrapped it over your basin and you took it home. So when you got home it was still hot.

My mother used to go up to Rye Lane to a shop to buy these live eels and you brought them home alive. You could get them chopped up there but she used to put them in a bucket with some water I think, till she was ready to cook them. She used to bring these awful eels home and they used to come out the sink! She used to bring them home alive, then she cut their heads off and c o o k e d them. She chopped the eel into pieces and then boiled it or stewed it. And the other thing she used to buy was



mussels, alive, bring them back and she used to put them in a bucket with oatmeal so they lived in this oatmeal. They would eat on this oatmeal I assume, and they used to get fatter and plumper. She'd say, "That'll plump them up." And then she would boil them.

The muffin man always had a suit on and a cap and a white muffler scarf. And he used to come along carrying a tray on his head and a bell. He'd ring his bell and call out, "Muffins!" and you'd go out and you'd buy whatever you wanted. I liked muffins. We used to do them on the range, on toasting forks.

Daisy Cook:

My mum was a lovely cook. She used to say to me, "Daisy, you should watch me." But I wasn't a bad cook. We used to have lovely fruit puddings made with bread. My mum used to do it with jam and different things. Then we used to have bread and butter puddings quite a lot. And rice puddings, always rice puddings.

Apples, we used to wrap them and keep them in boxes. They used to last till Christmas, some of them. Different from today. Everything's bought in shops mostly these days. There's not much cooking done. I loved them times when we were children.

Maureen Knott's RICE PUDDING

Ingredients

1 pint milk	1/4oz butter
1 1/2oz round or pudding rice	Nutmeg
1oz sugar	

Method

Put all ingredients into a buttered oven dish and grate a little nutmeg over.
 Bake in a slow oven for approximately 2 hours, stirring occasionally.
 A little evaporated milk will give a creamier pudding.
 Bake at: 140°C/270°F.

Gas mark 1

Woollen Socks and No Fingers

Penny Cheeseman:

My childhood memories are vividly of being cold and hungry, always. I was always cold and always hungry. I was in an orphanage from the age of five till I was ten when I was brought out of the orphanage by grandparents, the grandmother. But she died after two years, so we had to go and live with somebody my father had found. He was away at sea at the time so he couldn't look after us but the money

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that he sent for us to be looked after was spent on drink by this family, so we didn't get anything. We were always hungry, we were always cold. I can remember cutting cardboard the shape of the sole to put in the shoe because there was a big hole underneath. And I would cut this cardboard out and put it in the shoe. It didn't last long. We were always doing that.

I can remember having a coat for a long time and then I cut it down and made it into a skirt and a bolero. Make do and mend as they called it, didn't they?

Joyce Milan:

We always wore liberty bodices, and knitted vests, constantly - I don't think even in the summer I was allowed to take off the knitted vest, and it had sleeves. My mother knitted them, always in this sort of cream wool stuff, with a ribbon put through the neck and tied in a bow. When I think of the way she used to wrap me up when I went in the cold, on a cold day! I'd have one coat on and then she'd put on another coat, like a mac. And they weren't lightweight Macs, they were thick, like fisherman oils, and black. She'd put that on top. I would have a beret pulled right down over my ears so that my ears didn't get cold, and then she used to tie a scarf around me so that I couldn't move. I used to walk like a robot! She used to put the scarf round my neck twice, take the ends round the back, bring them round and pin them round the front. So when I went out I kept warm, but I don't think I had any circulation! I'd got so much clothes, and so much tied scarf round me, and I used to think, "Oh, I wish I had a proper fitting thing, that I didn't have to be tied up like this!" because I was always tied up so tightly! And then these horrible Wellington boots that used to rub my heel.

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WINTER SALE

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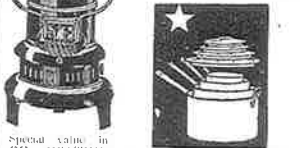
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Bill Winter:

If it was a question of snowballs, nine times out of ten you used to go back and get a pair of old socks, they were the gloves then. I would say you were fortunate if you had gloves. It used to be a pair of woollen socks and no fingers. What mother used to do: you'd get a pair of socks, right, and cut the end off and stitch them up so they'd end up as mittens. Socks in those days used to be home-made, made without turning a heel, you wouldn't have a heel in it. It was just a straight stocking. And then, of course, you didn't have a heel to wear out, did you? If it got a bit thin one side you'd turn it over. For the mittens you'd probably have the back ends going up the finger, stitched up. During the winter you'd probably be wearing Wellington boots, rubber boots, you know. During the summer you would use plimsolls, white plimsolls. Dad used to do his own cobbling. He'd mend boots, that would be one of his Friday night jobs. He'd go round and make sure all the tips were back on, 'cause we put blakies on - they're little tips that go on shoes to stop them wearing out.

Barbara Rowland:

Little boys in those days wore leather leggings up to the knees. And so when it got to lunch time, I used to have to trot a few hundred yards down the road - and I was provided with a button hook and I used to have to do my blooming little brother's leggings up, all the way up. And instead of caps little boys used to have little round hats that came right down.

Margaret Kippin:

When I was very young I had leggings. And we had buttoned boots all the way up, with about twenty buttons - can you imagine? Rushing for school in the morning.

If you lost a glove, well that was a tragedy. Once a kid got hold of my woolly hat, and aimed it, and it happened to go

in some puddle... "Why did you let them?" "Mum, I couldn't stop it!"

Doris Stevenson:

I never had a hand knitted vest. I always had more like a thick, flannelette sort of material, always white. It used to go in the old blue, Dolly Blue, on a Monday. Just boil everything in a copper and put it into a Dolly Blue. That's a little bag that held a blue substance and you put it into the water, so anything white came out nice and really white looking, and everybody used it. Most of our wool, anything we had finished with, was always taken to pieces, unravelled - we'd spend hours unravelling all this wool and then we'd wash it, wind it all round the back of a chair, and then hang it up to dry.

Hilary Heffernan:

It always snowed in my childhood on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors, where bitter winds swept across craggy space, besieging us in our homes crouched on the hillside.

It never seemed to stop us going out. Beneath overcoats we were wrapped in multi-layers of liberty bodices, patiently hand-knitted jumpers, hats and cycle socks or stockings. Even, once, hand-knitted panties ("Oh Mum! Do I have to?"). Wartime clothing coupons were scarce. Mum saved old jumpers, unravelling them. My task was to wind the wool lengthways round a cake rack, so Mum could steam it over a pan. This took all the curls out. I'd slip the skeins over my hands to be wound into balls for easier knitting. One winter she was delighted to get a bargain from the local shops - six ounces of "wild" wool, in its natural state from the sheep. "No coupons! It should be worn with lanolin still in it. They'll make marvellous vests!" she enthused. I don't know what kind of sheep they were, but those short-sleeved vests were like wearing barbed wire. They itched. I couldn't sit still in class and was stood in the corner for wriggling. I

consoled myself by twanging the wire clip holding the window pole and so got twenty lines as well.

Noor Elahi:

After working on the Pakistan Railway at Lahore, I got the chance to come here. The minister wrote in the paper that he wanted some people over here for jobs.

I came here, to London, in 1963. It was too cold. I can't manage when there is too much cold. I come from India, which is a hot country, so I am frightened when there is too much cold. And not enough warm clothes, no heating, nothing. I lived in Leyton. No heating, no, except a paraffin heater. At that time, no-one was using a gas heater. I came in winter time, and there was snow outside, and I was working outside on the deck on a ship. At first I did not have much money. Do you know how much I got, in 1963? Seven pounds for forty hours. Leytonstone I lived in - I used to walk to Aldgate East, to the clothes factory. I couldn't manage with a bus fare and food. I had to walk there and back. Seven pounds a week for forty hours. But afterwards, I bought warm clothes - a jacket, a coat, socks, gloves and everything.

Savita Patel:

I came here in March with my children and I say, "It's very cold." My children said, "Mum. We don't like it. It's very cold. Can we go back to India?" My little son was crying. There were two paraffin heaters for the whole house. With four children, very cold and no television. My husband was bringing home fourteen or fifteen pounds when we first came. Poor times. We had no money. I bought a winter coat and suits. I bought them before I arrived. I then went to work in trousers, skirts and blouses. Saris were very cold.

We went shopping one Saturday and bought the children

suits and jumpers. School clothes as well. Socks and everything. That was very expensive. At that time you can buy quite a lot. You put a £1 deposit and then you pay every week. We went to John Lewis store in Oxford Circus, because my husband was accountant there. He came nine months before me. From there I buy my clothes. I didn't like to wear the big coats but what can you do?

Inder Kaur Muder:

I had never worn a coat before. I didn't like it! I felt shy, I felt odd, as I had never worn it before. It was heavy as well.

The first time I saw the snow I went out and it was like a white sheet spread on the ground, and a white sheet above. White underneath and white above. I thought it was very beautiful, and then I was very excited. But the only thing I didn't like was that when I stepped in it - my foot went in the snow. Ice, water! And then my eyes started watering. Still I had to go shopping, and I did not realise you had to wear those Wellington boots. I used the shoes I came with, the ordinary light shoes that I brought from India. I did have a scarf on my head though.

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Avil Cupid:

I think I had a winter coat even before I came to this country, because my brother was here before me and he bought me a coat before I arrived. And I remember the first winter, I had everything, all over me covered up - my head, my face...! I remember going for a walk one evening. It was cold, and I was so much covered up - I went to buy something in a shop, and the woman was looking at me in such a way as to say, "Oh dear me! Why don't you perhaps go back to your country where it's nice and sunny! Why should you come here?"!

Mr A Seyan:

The weather at home doesn't change much because it's right on the equator. The weather remains the same. It's in the 70s or 80s throughout the year. The sugar cane grows there. When I first went and stayed in Derby, it was very cold. But I was very young - I used to have no problems. I had so many friends - they used to buy me everything. I was quite prepared. I had the right shoes, coat, everything.

Dotty Dixon:

My husband get my clothes for me. I didn't know where to go. And it did feel strange wearing long tings actually. I think that's why I fell over once, 'cause of the high boots and long skirt. I couldn't get up, I was flat on my back and my two foot was up in the air!

With that big heavy ting hanging around me you know, this coat and the cardigan and jumpers, and this fluffy hat hanging on me, I had to go to work four times a day and I was wondering, 'I wonder when this thing will end, wonder when this thing will end?' - the winter.

Edith Williams:

The Caribbean is very, very nice. We wear different clothes there, because we wear all the clothes we have. We have none that we put to one side, every one we wear all the time you can wear them. And we don't use no coat, no coat.

Chris Fullerton:

De wife's sister-in-law came from over Tooting and she took me down in Deptford and there was a Marks and Spencer down there, stores, and we went in there and she bought me some gear, cardigans and tings like dat and corduroy trousers which was much thicker dan clothes dat we arrive with from the West Indies, so as a matter of fact, most of my West Indies clothes, dey just stay in der in the house and I never wear dem, hardly wear dem, it's only when we get bright weather like when it comes round in April, May, and then we have to wear dem coat just round de area which you live, go to the pub. But if you wear the West Indies clothe in the winter, dat is the time you feel uncomfortable, 'cause the wind go right through you.

BACON & ONION ROLL**Ingredients**

8oz self-raising flour	6oz streaky bacon - chopped
4oz suet	1 medium onion - chopped
Pinch of salt	2 tsp dried sage

Method

Make the suet and roll out to oblong shape.
 Scatter over chopped bacon, onion and sage.
 Roll up, dampen edges to seal.
 Loosely wrap in greased foil, which has been pleated to allow for swelling, and twist ends to close.
 Steam for 2-2 1/2 hours.
 Alternatively, pudding may be wrapped in a clean cotton cloth, still allowing room for swelling.

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Pat Hanmore:

Of course if you developed a cold you either had Vick rubbed over your chest or maybe a block of camphor sewn onto the front of your vest in a little bag, so that you could inhale the vapours.

Hilda Kennedy:

You had a chamber pot. We all done a wee in the chamber pot because it was too cold to go out the back. If you had chilblains you had to put your foot in there and wee on it. And that was good for you. That was an old-fashioned remedy. Then there was cod liver oil and malt, to build you up.

I had flu once and I was at work and I went up to the doctor and he was an Irishman and he said, "You've got the flu girl: go home and that will be half a crown." So you went back and just went in to bed.

Bill Winter:

We had bad coughs and colds. With Mum or Dad it would be, "Right-o son, what you do now is you rub some of this on yer" - Dr Collis Brown, they still sell it. Vick you rub on your chest, on your back. That was a big help, you breathed it in. For chapped skin it used to be Melrose, it's like a cake of hard grease. What you do is warm it up and then it becomes slightly emulsified which

you could then rub in to your chapped areas. Then there was camphor, but what you didn't do was put it round where the nose was sore because it being camphor it's got that slight sting if you put it onto a sore area. But of course the smell of it was good. And then, if you were a kid, you'd probably have whooping cough or something like that. And it finished up that it'd be sprinkled on your pillow. It goes into your pillow and of course you're breathing it in during the night. Vick was rather a thing that attacked your sore spots as well. Don't put in on unbroken skin.

There was a bloke who had TB. You know, that was because of the dampness in their bedding, during the damper months. A lot of it was the fact that they didn't get the same diet, you know. There were a lot of kids who probably only got one good meal a day and the rest of it used to be bread and jam or bread and marge.

Lillian Burnett:

Snowfire was in a little round tin. And that would be very good for feet, and for chilblains especially. Nowadays you use a chapstick for lips, but snowfire was a similar sort of thing, but it was in a round tub, about the size of a night-light. And you used that. You used it for cold

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for relief and protection
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sores and all sorts of things. Chapped hands. And if you wore school uniform, or even if you didn't, your gym-slip just came down to your knees. And so your legs got chapped, because your socks just came up so far, and then you had that gap.

Joyce Milan:

Chilblains I got, dreadful. We all suffered with chilblains. You hardly hear of them now, do you? You don't hear of kiddies suffering with chilblains. We all had chilblains when we were young. It's the cold not getting to your extremities, like your fingers and your feet. They used to say it's because you go from hot to cold, but we didn't get all that much heat out of a fire, you know, there wasn't much heat coming from that fire.

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James Beckett:

If you had a sore throat the best cure was goose grease and a sweaty sock round it. And gooseberries, they charmed everything. I used to hate them. Cod liver oil and malt, it's good for you: used to get a big spoon every morning in the winter before you'd go to school. "Have you had your cod liver oil and malt?" You used to say yes even if you hadn't.

Elsie House:

We used to be rubbed with camphorated oil, back and front. If anybody was very bad she used to soak brown paper and put it on their chest. Peel it off, a bit each day, after the cold had gone.

Daisy Cook:

A lot of illness was around. There was pneumonia, diphtheria. There was scarlet fever. Them sort of things especially in the winter. Children caught them a lot.

I even slept with my sister, both in the one bed, when she was took away - they took them away in them days for scarlet fever, to New Cross hospital. I slept with her until the day she was took away with that. She was taken away with diphtheria too and I slept with her before they took her away with that. We all had to go and have our swabs taken after that. I never ever caught it.

Ezra Keys:

When I went for my first job in this country, it was up in Charlton and I had to wear slippers - the sort you wear indoors - to go to work, because my feet can't go in the shoes. Chilblains stopped me from putting them on. My little toe there burst, the wide vein, it was that bad. Anyway, you know, I'm scuttering around and my manager in the firm - he was a very good man, Milton, and you know he could sack me because I couldn't cope - he gave me a light job and I sat there and carried on. When it reaches about the third year in this country my blood started to thin out you see. Because that doctor there down in New Cross told me that it's the circulation that cause chilblains - the blood was that thick that in cold weather it couldn't circulate. And by now I'm happy, no more chilblains and the funny thing about it - when I came to this country with all the bad weather, I'm never sick any other way.

I was hearing about England 'cause Winston Churchill came down there a year or two before and asked the Government of Jamaica to send people. (So when we hear these people being bad-mouthed and discriminated against and all the rest of it, well, we didn't come here

on our own, it was Churchill, 'cause the war was just about over and Churchill came to Jamaica and ask the Jamaican Government to send as much people as they can to help rebuild Britain and that's what caused thousands of us to be here, otherwise I wouldn't be here.) I was earning seven pounds, ten shilling a week with the Jamaica Government in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, and when I came here my first job was eight pounds, only ten shilling more. It was eight pounds up in Charlton, I was working for a firm named Driscoll, a paint firm, and believe me when I came here many, many days I sat down and I weep. And

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 numbers are still able to
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**RUB
 OUT
 PAIN**

I cried, "Why did I come here, for what reason? Eight pounds a week and with all that aggro with my feet, why did I come here?"

Dotty Dixon:

I was living in Deptford and my brother said to me, "Look outside," and outside I saw this white ting coming. And I thought to myself, "What is this? Someting like flour is coming down," I said, and he said to me, "Go outside." I said, "Not me!" He took me by the hand and took me to the gate and then I saw this white stuff coming down and I said, "Oh no, oh no, I want to go home, send me back home!" I couldn't keep up with that white thing coming down and then I realised what it was and the following morning he was about to go to work and he took me outside the gate and said, "Look at this." It began to harden and becomes icy and I thought to myself, "I'm not going out in this ting, I going to stop in the house here".

He get a job for me in Woolwich, in the army hospital, the military hospital. And I had to go out four times a day in it, so gradually I get used to it.

I fell over once. I was working a split duty, 7 to 1, 6 to 8, 7 to 12, 2 to 5 and this day it was 7 to 1, 6 to 8. I was going back about half past five to start work and I fell over in the boots he give me. I tried to get up and I fell again and one of your people saw me, come and put me two foot down and then lift me up, and said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going back to work". So he took me to the bus-stop, 21 bus-stop, and I went up to Eltham and change across for Woolwich and when I got there my arm was full of blood through the coat. The Matron called for the ambulance to take me home. When I get indoors and when I sit down I couldn't get up and when I stand up, I couldn't sit down. I had a slipped disc. From the fall.

Out in the Cold

Joyce Milan:

We used to have winter warmers. We used to have a tin can and put holes in it - an old baked beans tin or something like that. It would have been baked beans usually because we didn't have much else in tins. We used to make holes in it, and put a bit of paper and some bits of rag in it, and set fire to it. And bits of twig, if we could get a few bits of twig. And we used to carry that on a piece of string, and we used to whoosh it round to make it warm. We used to call them winter warmers. The smoke used to come out of the holes, and you could put your hands round, and you know, you could feel the warmth.



*A wintery scene on what were the outskirts of London:
Hither Green Lane around the turn of the century.*

Doris Stevenson:

During the winter from about the age of three, I always went to Sunday League football matches with my uncles. 'Cause most of my uncles was in one team and they decided that I should be their mascot so at three years old I was dressed up in red shirt, little white shorts and I had to keep the ball for them. Whether the other side liked it or not, I had to keep the ball for them otherwise my uncles didn't play and that was it. My dad used to put my coat on and these terrible gaiter things that had to be done up with a button hook. I mean the time it would take him to do my buttons up, it was half time, but then, I had these gaiter things on to keep me warm then. They used to let me take the quarters of oranges round at half time to various players.

On a Saturday in the winter, we used to go up to Rye Lane and they were open fairly late then. All the lights used to be on and it used to be really colourful. Right at the top of Rye Lane used to be a fair. Wilson's Fair. I think that used to be the name. With the old carousel and the bumper cars and the caterpillar. And we'd go there and on the way back we'd come down to a shop in Peckham High Street that used to do faggots and pease-pudding.

Doreen Davies:

My dad used to set Sunday aside for us especially, because, working for a trade, he was out in the morning before we got up and by the time he got in in the evening we'd been in bed ages. So Sunday he took us out in the morning while Mum cooked the Sunday meal. Then in the afternoon, after it was cleared away, after we had our cup of tea, we always went for a walk to Peckham Rye. And we'd wander all around the park and Dad would look at the bowls and we would at the peacocks that used to be in Peckham Rye then and then we'd walk, perhaps to the Union Tavern or the Globe in Hill Street and Dad or Mum would have one drink and we'd have lemonade and then we'd come home, but he'd spend the

day with us. He would spend time explaining what that bird was, what that tree was, what that flower was. So he may not have been an educated man in a lot of ways, but he taught me at least a lot about nature and how you should look after it. Or we'd go to Greenwich and walk to the park there, 'cause there was lots of things that he could point out to me there. We used to go sometimes in winter, if it was one of those lovely bright Sunday afternoons.

Joe Scala:

All the Italians who sold ice cream - there were lots of them in South London - in the winter they all sold chestnuts. So in the winter we all went and stood round the chestnut fires. People used to buy their chestnuts before they went into the cinemas.

East Lane, famous market place. Winter and summer but mainly in the winter, it bustled more in the winter. We'd go down to this market and it would be freezing. I remember there was all characters. There was a fellow

Lilian Burnett's TRIPE AND ONIONS

Ingredients

<i>1 1/2 lb Tripe</i>	<i>1/4 pint water</i>
<i>2 large onions</i>	<i>1oz flour</i>
<i>1oz butter</i>	<i>Salt & pepper to taste</i>
<i>1/2 pint milk</i>	<i>Parsley</i>

Method

*Cut tripe into strips or small pieces.
Place into a pan of cold water, bring to the boil then throw away water.
Put the tripe and onions in the milk/water; add seasoning and simmer gently until tender (about 2 hours).
Blend flour with a little milk and boil until smooth; add butter. Pour over tripe.
Garnish with fresh parsley and serve with boiled potatoes.*

called Bob Strong. He was selling phosphorene. He used to sell it as a tonic. You'd put a spoonful in a glass of water and it would make you strong and healthy. All the vitamins you needed. "It keeps you young at forty." Some stuff in a bottle it was. Bob Strong looked a fairly fit fellow, more muscles than most people but you wouldn't call him muscular. So, part of his act - because he worked in a gutter on the floor, a little stall with all his bottles of stuff on it - was his son. He was about our age, 13 or 14, a strong kid. He used to say, "Look what it's done for him!" Then he'd put boxing gloves on the kid and he boxed with the kid, in the market place on a Sunday morning. We're all standing round there with these old dodderers waiting to get their shilling bottle. It was part of the entertainment. Bob Strong, he'd pull a skinny kid out of the audience and say, "Put these gloves on. Spar with my boy." This boy would whack this kid. But on one occasion another friend of ours, another London born Italian, Alf Esposito, who was a good boxer, he called him. Alf was a good 'un, and about two minutes after it started, Bob Strong said, "All right, that's enough, take your gloves off." And then he'd say to the rest of us, "You can still see what we can do. Anyone want a bottle of this?"

Elsie House:

I used to go out on the back of a motorbike. I used to go out to Hayes Common. I got my name on two or three tree trunks down there, where I used to go and do my courting. Used to be freezing cold, frosty night. The old moon would be shining bright. There we'd be, cuddling up. I'd be inside his big leather coat. They wore leather coats on the motorbikes. Never felt the cold.

Penny Cheeseman:

I was fourteen years of age and it was January, 1940. My step-mother was expecting a baby, my young sister. We woke up on this morning to snow like you've never seen

before. We had twelve steps leading up to the front of our house and as you came out of the front door I could only see one, so I quickly shut the door again because it was freezing cold and I went down into the basement where we lived. That was our living quarters, the basement, because the rest of the house was too cold.

I was told by my father that I would have to go with a note from the midwife to queue up for a quarter of a hundredweight of coal for our fire - my stepmother was allowed this coal because she was pregnant. So, they dressed me up in a pair of wellington boots - my father's which were about six times too big - a long overcoat and as I stepped out into the snow, I went right down up to my shoulders. How I got to the coal yard I don't know and I had to drag this little wooden sleigh along the back of me to carry the coal in, this wooden sleigh and a sack. I somehow managed to get to the coal yard and as I came round the corner there must have been about a thousand people, all queuing up for coal 'cause coal was rationed. And once you had used your ration then you had to burn on your fire

Maureen Knott's SCOTCH BROTH

Ingredients

<i>1lb middle neck of lamb</i>	<i>1 carrot, peeled and diced</i>
<i>1 1/2 oz pearl barley, washed and blanched</i>	<i>1 turnip, peeled and diced</i>
<i>Salt & Pepper</i>	<i>2 leeks, washed, trimmed and chopped</i>
<i>2 pints water</i>	<i>A little chopped parsley</i>

Method

Put meat, barley, a little salt and water into saucepan, bring to boil and skim.
Add carrots, turnips and leeks, cover and simmer for 2 hours.
Remove meat, cut from bone and dice if needed.
Remove surface fat from broth and season.
Replace meat, add parsley and bring to boil before serving.

whatever you could find - shoes, potato peelings, anything. The shoes did stink, but they threw out a warmth and one of our jobs as children was going round all over the place looking for things like this, you know, to burn. Anyway, I froze, absolutely froze in the queue, I think I had chilblains for about six months afterwards 'cause I was so cold, and I got eventually to the front of the queue: none left. So I didn't get the coal, after queuing up it must have been two hours or more for this coal in a little thin coat. So I had to go all the way back and say, no, I couldn't have any and I got a good hiding for not getting this. "Where had I been, where had I been all these hours?" Oh yes, get a wallop for that, 'cause I didn't get the coal.

Sushita Patel:

I came in 1965, to this country. When I came I think it was summer. But in October, November it was so cold and there was snow, and slush - slipping on my feet. We don't like it. The saris got wet, when you walked they got wet. The saris got dirty. In India in the monsoon time they got dirty too, but, when days were rainy, we didn't go out. We didn't have to go out too much. Here we had to be careful with the sari every time we crossed the road.

Chris Fullerton:

Well when I come off the train someone asked me, "What do you notice about the houses here?" as we was going along. I said, "Well they are far different to the houses I know", I say. "They look so dead." Because in the West Indies the houses are painted, they colourful and more bungalow. He said, "Do you notice anything else?" I said, "Yes, I notice a tall thing like a chimney right at the top." He said, "Well that's for to keep you warm in the winter."

When I first saw snow, I looked at it and I said to myself, "How wonderful it is, everything is just painted brilliant

white", you know. I went outside and I picked up some in my hands, I smelt it, I taste it and I went in and I wrote to my sister, I said, "My dear sister, you may hear people say, 'White as Snow' but nothing is as white as snow, snow is beautiful."

People here can be cold, to be honest with you, but there again can you blame them? I don't think I can blame them much. People are very busy in this country, not like the West Indies, with people more relaxed, the weather is nice. In summer time you find people are far different to winter time, even in this country. It has something to do with the weather. People more easier to smile in summer, they happier. And not only that: summer time, people aren't covered up, young and old, everybody willing to show what they have. Winter, nobody can see each other then.

Doris Brown:

English winter: they set out telling me about it but I didn't worry about it because hearing about it is totally different. When I came, I didn't to be frank ever really want to say when I wrote home, because I want to feel that when I am writing I can say what I enjoyed, you know. So I didn't worry, if sometimes tears coming down...

Ezra Keys:

Well I leave Jamaica, I came into this country. And when I came here for the first six months, if I had wings I would have flown back straight to Jamaica because I had never felt anything like that in all my life. I landed here on the 12th August and from September it started getting cold; October it was rather worse; November, the first time in my life I've seen the snow and know what is snow. Of course I've seen it on the screen in Jamaica, I'd go to the pictures, but I didn't know what was the actual snow. Then when Christmas come here, we stay indoors and have a little fun indoors, nobody can go outside because

it's snowing, but back in my country when it's Christmas everybody's all over the place. All over the place, more sports, more functions. So I say, "Oh, this country is dead", but that wasn't all. Then come January: One day I went into a record shop and when I came out I discovered I couldn't walk, I can't move. Back indoors I took my shoes off; I discovered all my toes had gone red and this thing now is chilblains. Believe me, if you spread a bag of flour, which is the softest thing I think, I couldn't walk in it.

I wrote to my sister back in Jamaica. I asked her if she could get me a pair of wings to fly back home. That was the first six months I saw. It's impossible, so I had to just make up my mind: you come already, what can you do?

FAGGOTS

Ingredients

<i>1/2 lb minced pigs liver</i>	<i>3oz suet</i>
<i>1/2 lb pork sausage meat</i>	<i>1 tsp dried sage</i>
<i>2 medium onions, peeled, quartered, boiled and minced</i>	<i>1/2 tsp mixed, dried herbs</i>
<i>9oz breadcrumbs</i>	<i>Salt & Pepper</i>

Method

*Thoroughly mix together all ingredients and shape into 8 balls.
Dust with flour.
Pack closely in a roasting tin and bake until well browned,
approximately 30 minutes.*
- *220°C/425°F*
Gas mark 7

Serve hot with pease pudding and/or rich gravy.

Pea-Soupers

Doris Stevenson:

You could smell the fog but you got no sound. We used to follow one another. I can remember once I was with somebody in a car and we were following this car and the car in front stopped and we stopped and we ended up in these people's yard and they looked at us as if we were con merchants.



An unemployed man searches for work in the fog.

Doreen Davis:

Every Friday we used to go down to near Tower Bridge where my father's mother lived. If it was foggy when we came out of there, my dad would always walk home because we'd go up Tower Bridge Road into Great Dover Street and then along the Old Kent Road that way. That

was the only way we could get home and I used to be absolutely petrified. And this must have been before the war so I must have been about eight to nine years old. You just couldn't see in front of you. I really hated it, everything was deadened. That's what I didn't like about it. People could suddenly loom up out of the thing and it used to worry me. I suppose because as a child we used to go to the pictures and you'd see some of these films where people loom out of the fog and kill somebody. I used to be very frightened, I used to grab onto my dad's hand.

Bill Winter:

Fogs - peasoupers! With people burning fuels as they did - coals - they did used to make a lot of smoke. Of course you only needed to have a nice damp sultry day and low cloud and that used to hold the smoke down which then became a peasouper fog. But really, we knew it as fog but it wasn't truthfully fog. It was smoke. When you breathed in, if you put a handkerchief in front of your face you'd get a black mark where your lips were or your nose. But you were never educated that that was dangerous for you, all you knew was that it tasted like coal. My nan had coughs which were three times worse when the old peasoupers were about. "Keep indoors, keep warm!" It was that they knew it was cleaner indoors. Oh, they'd turn round and say, "If you're not feeling well, go inside and keep warm."

The traffic wasn't as crowded as it is now, and we did have one thing that never used to go off the rails and that was the trams. And given the fog, what they used to do was travel round about five miles an hour, with this old fella clanging his old bell. But at least he had rails to run on and the only time he was going to come into contact with anybody else was if they were on the same set of rails. You did get the junction where the roads narrowed up and they went on to one line - one tram would stop while the other one came through. They had their little systems of signalling, that was the idea of the bell. And also, they had

lights on. You could cycle down down the centre of the tramlines. You could ride along it on a bike but then of course you couldn't get off!

Bill Gibson:

Basically we used to say if we get a fog in Bermondsey we know where we are by the smells. For instance you'd get a smell of a leather factory, you'd get a smell of Peak Freans, you'd get a smell of the chocolate factory, Shuttleworth's. So you knew basically where you were. But I've been in fog, a really bad one, where you honestly had to feel your way like a blind person. You couldn't see the ground.

You'd come out of work and you knew the direction you was going in and you'd get to the main road and all you could hear was men shouting where they was walking in front of the horse and carts or the buses, directing them. And you'd think you was standing on the pavement - didn't have no torches - and all you could hear was voices and then all of a sudden, you'd hear somebody shout, "Hold it, hold it, hold it," where the bus came up on the pavement where he couldn't even keep to the kerb. That's how it was the whole way home wasn't it? You could not see a hand in front of your face.

Mary Gibson:

The curtains got black and when they hung the washing out there'd be all soot spots over the washing. They stood there hours doing this washing and when they took it in it used to be all soot smuts all the way over. But I mean the walls and the roofs of our houses were so black, weren't they? I suppose they was a hundred years old when we lived in them, you couldn't do nothing about cleaning it. You'd clean your doorsteps and your windowsills but they was so black and dingy.

Barbara Rowland:

My husband, when he was fourteen and apprenticed, he used to put the front wheel of his bike in the tram line as a guide when it was foggy. Well, with the noise that the trams made, you'd soon hear them.

Elsie House:

We used to go out with a torch. Walk for miles and get a shilling, showing your little torch to help the cars, show them the way. The driver was in the car, only crawling. We'd walk along with our little torch and show him the way with the kerb. Used to get a shilling, a lot of money. Used to get black, come back with black faces, like soot.

Joyce Milan:

The fogs were absolutely ghastly. My mum used to wrap herself up - you couldn't see her! She used to put scarves



YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD ME COUGHING!

Some of my pals called it a graveyard cough — but it was only a bit of phlegm. Every morning the same old thing — cough, cough, cough. Then I began taking Beecham's Lung Syrup and, believe me, it's wonderful stuff. Breaks up phlegm in no time, soothes the throat, stops all that waste of energy. Anyone with a cough should try Beecham's Lung Syrup — thousands say there's nothing to touch it! 1/4 & 2/8 including Purchase Tax.

BEECHAM'S LUNG SYRUP
— THERE'S NOTHING TO TOUCH IT!

all round her mouth, and you'd just see her eyes, and her hat pulled right down. She used to suffer with bronchitis, so of course it was always a great worry to her, the fogs. But you couldn't see a thing - they swirled around. And my father was a tram driver on the open front trams - you see they were all open-frontage - and in the snow, he'd come home looking like a snowman. You couldn't see him! If you saw the tram go by, you couldn't see him, he was just like a snowman, covered in snow from head to foot! And when he came home from the fogs, he used to wear goggles, and when he took his hat and his goggles off all you could see was a white patch round his eyes. He was black, absolutely black otherwise.

My husband, in 1946, '47, when he came out of the navy, got a job over at Mortlake, and he used to go on a motorbike to work. And he used to come home black in fog. And he'd have to travel all the way standing up on the motorbike, on the foot pedal, just to see the kerb all the way home. He was absolutely black when he came in - there was no white on his face at all.

But there wasn't so much traffic. Traffic didn't travel that fast either. The cars didn't have all that much power, you know. But there were accidents. Push-bikes were the greatest problem, really. But fogs were frightening. And they went on for days, absolute days.

Sushita Patel:

I don't like fog. In those days it was very foggy. Never seen fog before. We came here and saw fog. In the morning it was cloudy and wet, very sort of foggy. We said, "We can't go out." Not so many cars but still afraid of going outside or of crossing the road. Especially in the winter time when it gets dark at three o'clock or half past two.

Ezra Keys:

One of my sons was going to primary school near Brockley and we were summoned to attend a parents' meeting and the fog came down that evening so thick that I couldn't find the school. I was running round and round in a circle, I could never find the school. It was terrible. Above everything, above all the various weather that you encounter within this country, I dreaded the fog more than any other, more than snow. Especially being a driver.

Dotty Dixon:

Once I was coming back from work and it was so dark that I couldn't even see, somebody had to lead me to the door. We didn't have fogs in Jamaica, not really. Only along the coast sometimes you see a bit of mist. It was strange here.

PEASE PUDDING

Ingredients

*1 knuckle of bacon
4oz split peas*

Method

*Tie split peas loosely in a large cloth, allowing plenty of room for swelling.
Put these, with the knuckle into a large saucepan, and cover with cold water.
Bring to boil and boil rapidly for 10 minutes.
Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, adding more boiling water to cover, if needed.
Remove knuckle, empty peas into stock and simmer for a further 10 minutes.
Strain peas well, add a large knob of butter and mash if wanted.*

Snowmen and Skating

Mary Gibson:

We had a street that had no traffic coming through it. It was just a street with houses both sides, and all the kids'd come out after school, and they'd build a snowman. And then we'd go in and pester our mothers for socks, and any old rags to do it up, you know. And then, as the adults were coming home from work, we'd stand there, and we'd expect them to give us a ha'penny, because we'd made this big snowman, down the street. I can't remember having gloves as a kid, but we used to run in and get old socks, you know. Or Mum would cut the arms out of an old jumper and you'd wrap them round your hand. But our snowman used to be able to stop there. Nobody would dare knock it down - there were too many of us down the street, you know. People used to come through from work, but it was more than their life was worth to knock our snowman down!

Joe Scala:

When it snowed we made for places like Forest Hill, Honor Oak Road and One Tree Hill. We used to make toboggans. My dad made me a toboggan out of fish boxes, nailed it all together and took it up there. The fish boxes were made of wood with thick wire band nailed on round them. I remember he'd pulled the wire off and nailed them under the sledge. He'd make two planks of wood, curved at the end, then he'd put a metal edge on them. I remember coming once on a ride down Canonbie Road, a very steep hill, right in the middle of the road. It just got out of control and I wanted to stop. I couldn't stop it. Right down, right across Forest Hill Road, halfway up Brenchley Gardens before it stopped. I could have been run over about ten times. Ice covered. We used to make slides in the playground, keep going up and down on it. Stamping on it and rubbing it. Another thing to keep warm.

Bill Winter:

Snowmen? Yeah, but nine times out of ten, somebody would come along and knock it down, wouldn't they. You very seldom got one finished. You've got to do a big ball, to start off. Well, in a block of flats you have so much flat area and, of course, if anybody started to make a snowman they'd be attacked by the snowball brigade, because it'd spoil somebody else's treat.

"Don't make a slide on the pavement, there could be an accident." You'd get told off and that. Up our end was gravel; up the bottom end was all paving stones. So, of course, paving stones and the pavements would be best for slides. Even big old ladies would fall over.

Kitty Finch:

We'd play snowballs with the police. They were lovely, they were smashing. When I was living with my aunt in Napier Street, Deptford, it was right opposite the back of the police station. And I can remember when I was little they

Eileen O'Sullivan's OXTAIL SOUP

Ingredients

<i>1 small Oxtail</i>	<i>3 pints stock or water</i>
<i>1 small turnip</i>	<i>1 inch of mixed herb</i>
<i>1 large onion</i>	<i>Seasoning to taste</i>
<i>3 medium carrots</i>	

Method

Soak the cut up Oxtail in salt water for one hour then throw away the water.
Put Oxtail in a large pan with the stock and cut up vegetables and mixed herbs.
Simmer for about four hours.
It is a good idea to cook the day before use - when cooled, remove fat from the top of soup.

used to meet at the top of Napier Street and form a line, in twos, and they had to march down Napier Street into the police station. Then if it was a snowy day, when they were coming out they'd always play snowballs with us. I knew them all there, it was lovely.

Barbara Rowland:

There was a lovely hill and at the bottom it had a pond, and we used to go tobogganing up there. And when the ponds in the forest got frozen, there used to be some skates which were called ducks' skates. Now if you can imagine, you've got a wooden platform, and then the blade was in there, and at the end of the wooden platform, there was one screw, and it went into the heel of your shoe. But don't forget, a leather heel then was about seven or eight layers of leather.



*Children tobogganing in Hilly Fields, South London
in the harsh winter of 1947*

And then there were straps which came round through this wood, over the top, and you just screwed it. Then you'd tie the straps round the top, and they were your skates, and we used to skate on the ponds in Epping Forest. And we got wood nuts and cob nuts there too.

The other thing we used to do was go out in the autumn and pick up acorns. We used to get great big bags and shoe-boxes of acorns and the corn chandlers used to give us pennies for them, because they were for feeding the pigs.

Margaret Kippin:

We used to go up on Hilly Fields and we didn't have toboggans but we'd use anything. A tray. Mind you, the boys used to get into trouble at school, because they used to make slides, and of course it was dangerous and they were always getting told off. But we didn't mind - we still liked going on them! It was the boys who would get told off!

Joyce Milan:

Rochester Way, when we first moved in, wasn't made. They'd done like a pavement, but there was no paving stones. They'd just got a kerb by the side of the road, and then it went right down into ruts of mud. And where the St Barnabus Church is now, they had a big gate right across it, being farmlands, you see. And it wasn't a through road at all, so you can imagine after the snow - all that slush. It was the mess! The mess it brought to you. I can remember newspapers on the floor, because Mum used to wash the lino, and there were always newspapers on top of it so you wouldn't walk it all indoors, but it was messy.

Doreen Davis:

We used to have this rope that crossed our road. Our road, you couldn't go through it because it had a canal at the bottom of it, so we could have this rope right

across the road where you'd have probably two people turning it and there could be as many as a dozen others and they'd all do their skipping. Or we'd throw this rope round the lamp posts. 'Cause at that time the old gas lamp posts had two things that stuck out. You'd throw it over that and you'd twist as though you were on a swing round and round the lamp post.

Daisy Cook:

We'd make our way to Blackheath, to what we called The Prince of Wales pond to skate on the ice. Always up there when it was winter. On the ice, on the ponds on Blackheath. There was two. One what we called Prince of Wales and one that was right near the park gates. We'd wear our boots. We'd run and slide on them. Only our big high boots and big, thick, long coats. Not like the little jackets now what they wear. I often fell on the ice but I don't think we ever worried much. Mum used to say "Don't you put anything good on. Put on your old coat." I can remember one coat what Mum and Dad bought me. It was brilliant red with fur on and it had gold buttons down. We never bothered to wear gloves much. If we did they'd be wringing wet the time we finished snowballing. But always had scarves wrapped around our necks, always. Tam o'shanters mostly.

I remember this Christmas my mum had had these lovely mauve thick serge dresses made for myself and my sister. My gran made these lovely mauve berets to wear. After Christmas we went down to Greenwich Pier and she'd made these Tam o'shanters, with long tassels on. Some boys ran by and grabbed hold of my tassel and flung it straight into the Thames. I was afraid to go home. I can remember that because my grandmother used to sit there knitting, thinking it was a wonderful thing she'd done for us. I was afraid to go home after that was thrown into the Thames.

Jeet Kaur Ram:

When I first woke up in the morning, after the first night of snow, I was so surprised, because I felt as though someone had put white everywhere, and I woke up everyone in the house. My son took photographs, and we made round balls of snow, and I was comparing the round balls of snow with laddoos, which are an Indian sweet. So we copied our English neighbours who had made a snowman, and made a snowman ourselves!



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Remember, remember...

Doris Stevenson:

It used to start ages before, going round the greengrocers or anywhere picking up all the orange boxes, or any boxes. And the fireworks always seemed to be much better then. I don't suppose they were. We always seemed to have lots of coloured ones. And the Catherine wheels seemed to be so much larger.

There used to be a corn merchants and we used to go there, and if you were lucky a man might give you some bits of straw which we used to stick on the guy. It depended who was on. Some of them weren't very happy about letting you have it. But there was a couple of nice men there and they would give you bits of straw to stick out for hair.

I didn't used to go out with the guy, but people used to go out and wherever we went, "Penny for the guy, penny for the guy!" But they used to be proper guys, people made more effort. They had bits of wool and straw for their hair and they really put effort into them.

Joe Scala:

Round the corner from our shop in the Old Kent Road was a street called Mardyke Street. It was the most fearful street that you ever saw. It was a narrow street and it ran between two other streets. On each side of the road were these huge, four or five storeys high, tenement buildings. When you looked up at them all they were stone. They were like two rows of caves each side of the road. They were big black stone entrances. When you went in there was a stone staircase, stone walls. It looked like Alcatraz. That was Mardyke Street. The toughest families and kids. It struck fear in our hearts to talk about it. Every Guy Fawkes

night they lit a fire in the road from one side of the road to the other. Fire engines had to come and put it out every, every, every bonfire night! For years and years and years. There can't be buildings like that anywhere in England now. Bonfire right across the road. Old furniture, old cupboards, old wardrobes and set the lot alight. We used to go and stand in the distance. You daren't set foot in Mardyke Street. I shudder to think of it now. All the tough families. Families noted for breeding villains and toughness, fights. Fights every night. Mardyke Street was the toughest of the lot. There was nothing you could do about it. While it was burning there were about four entrances on each side of the road. Big stone holes in the wall and above them was a space, at the top of each stairs. When the fire was burning people would come running along and throw stuff from there on to the fire. You've never seen anything like it. It was like Napoleon was invading the place, the bonfires.

Lilian Burnett's LANCASHIRE HOT POT

Ingredients

12oz lean stewing steak (or best end of neck of lamb)	1oz margarine
2 large onions	Hot water
1lb potatoes	Salt & pepper
	Parsley

Method

Cut meat into neat pieces.
Peel and slice potatoes & onions ($\frac{1}{4}$ thick)
Fill a casserole dish with alternate layers of meat, onion and potatoes, ending up with potatoes. Sprinkle salt and pepper over each layer.
Pour enough hot water into the casserole to about half fill: put margarine on top in small pieces and put on the lid.
Bake in oven at Gas Mark 3 for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
Remove lid for the last 20 minutes to brown top.
Garnish with fresh parsley.

Doreen Davis:

We always seemed to get more for the money 'cause we used to pay a penny or tuppence a week all year on a firework card so that come firework night, you've got your money saved up. I used to save a halfpenny out of the pocket money that was given to me - we probably only had about tuppence pocket money and I would put it on. And Mum would put some on as well, unbeknown to me, so that when I went round to get my fireworks I used to think that I must have saved up so much money because I had so many fireworks. They were lovely, they were pretty ones. They weren't all these terrible bangers and the sparklers were larger. We used to have this nice garden so we always used to do the bonfire right down the bottom of the garden.

Joyce Milan:

First of all we used to watch the fire works at Crystal Palace, because you could see those, you see, from the green opposite where we lived. All of us used to sit there and watch the fireworks at Crystal Palace, and we could see them quite clearly, right across from where we were. And of course bonfire nights, we always had a bonfire in the garden. And sparklers. Oh, I used to love a box of fireworks! I used to be thrilled to bits to go with my dad and get fireworks, I really loved that. They were pretty ones too, they used to come up like pyramids, you know.

Mary Gibson:

Guy Fawkes, that was a day, wasn't it. I mean, we always went out and made up a guy of some sorts. But you've got to bear in mind - our streets were virtually empty. We only had the occasional water cart coming round, with a horse and cart to water the streets. So that was our playground, virtually. But of course that was during the summer. For Guy Fawkes night everybody had their own bonfires. If they didn't have it in the street, they had it in their back garden.

All us kids down the street would make our Guy Fawkes, and put him in the pram, an old pram. And we used to come up to the top of the street, and there was a big leather factory called Beddington's, and we'd stand outside there, "Penny for the guy!" as they all came out of work. But the whole crowd of kids down the street never kept the money for themselves. It was pooled. Don't matter if you had three Guy Fawkes. Whatever you made went in a tin. And then somebody'd say, "Well my mum'll mind it," so one person would mind the money. And you'd go out about two weeks before Guy Fawkes night, to get your money. Your parents didn't give you money for fireworks; you had to earn it. And then when it got to the day before firework night, whoever was holding the money would go

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with a couple of kids, and pick out fireworks. And then they were done in the middle of the street, for everybody. The men would fetch the old wood out from these yards, you know. Whoever had the spare wood would fetch it out, to keep the bonfire going. But I don't ever remember being allowed to light a firework. The kids were only allowed to have sparklers, standing round. And anybody that went near that fire was sent back indoors. The parents controlled it all.

Joyce Milan's STEAK & KIDNEY PUDDING

Ingredients

Pastry

1lb plain flour
8oz shredded suet
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
Cold water to bind

Filling

12oz skirt or leg of beef
2-4oz ox kidney
1oz flour
Salt & Pepper

Method

Mix all pastry ingredients together in a basin and bind with water to a soft dough, yet leaving bowl clean when mixing and able to roll out.

Place on floured board and roll out to 1/2 inch thickness. Well grease china or pyrex pudding bowl and line with pastry, pressing firmly to sides.

Cut beef into approx. 2 inch strips and kidneys into 1 inch pieces.

Place a piece of kidney inside meat strip and roll up.

Add salt & pepper to 1oz flour and toss meat into this - place inside basin and add 2 tbs cold water.

Roll out a lid of pastry and put on top, moistening edges with water and press together firmly.

Cover with greaseproof paper and secure with aluminium foil - if you have a good pudding cloth cover basin and tie string firmly around rim, pull cloth slightly and bring up four corners to top and tie two good strong knots (this is ideal for lifting pudding out of boiling water).

Place in a large saucepan of boiling water, two thirds up the side of the basin, and boil gently for 4-6 hours, remembering to refill with BOILING WATER as necessary.

Make up 1/2 pint of oxo gravy or beef stock for additional liquid if required.

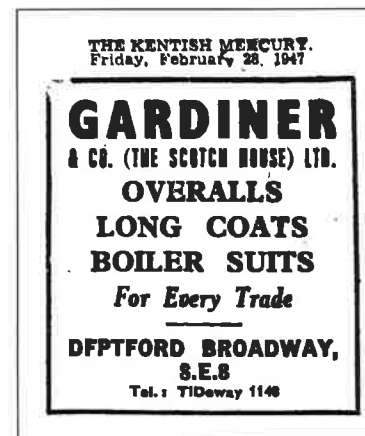
Bill Winter:

Going round and finding as much wood as you could in the month before it, that was the idea. If you went along the old riverside areas you'd get a lot of what they called dunnage, being timber floating in the Thames. As the river ebbed and flowed a lot of it used to come down on the shore. You'd go along and wait along the shoreline.

There'd be a lot that you could pick up there. You had to pick it up early to get it dried out, or hoping that it was going to dry out. But that wasn't a safe place. There are certain places where you've got this very soft mud that looks as if it's only inches deep and you could fall over and disappear into it. At Dockhead, there was one there that they had step rungs going right the way down into the water and when the water run out there was only probably about two or three feet of solid shoreline that you could see and after that it became mud. It was literally a pool of mud, you know.

Well we did try burning the driftwood in the road but they wouldn't wear that, would they? 'Cause a lot of the roads you know were cobbled. There were still a lot of horse and carts about and in actual fact it was a cobbled road and it was too close to the buildings. Somebody would send for the fire engines wouldn't they?

Fireworks, you could go in and buy them singly. You didn't have to go and buy a box like you do today. Then you could go and they'd have them up in boxes - "They're a ha'penny each and they're a penny each."



See in the New...

Elsie House:

We used to stay up for the New Year. You was allowed to stay up. People used to stand at the gate with a little drink in a glass, wish everybody a Happy New Year. My dad and my mum used to stand at the gate. Always let me open the front door and the back door, let the old year out and let the new one come in. And shake the mats, get rid of all the old dust and muck. I still do that now.

It had got to be a dark man who knocked on your door, supposed to be lucky. You never locked your door in them days. Anybody could walk in and out. You might be sitting round the fire and somebody suddenly walks through and says, "Oh, hello." Never locked your doors when you went to bed at night.

Joyce Milan:

New Year's Eve my parents didn't party. But they never went to bed - my mum and dad wouldn't go to bed till 12 o'clock. And my mother always went to the front gates. And they used to bang dustbin lids and saucepans, and shout out across to everybody that came along. She'd stand out there and say, "Happy New Year!" to everybody. And everybody else came out, and everybody went out banging lids and saucepans, and anything, at 12 o'clock. I celebrated it when I started going dancing, but I think I went to bed when I was a kid mostly. She used to say to me, "You'd better listen for the hooters." We used to hear the hooters on the river. And they were loud. You don't hear it now, because there aren't so many boats. All the boats on the Thames - at 12 o'clock all the ships' sirens used to go.

Joyce Milan's BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

Ingredients

1 Pint milk (not skimmed)	4 slices white bread
2 Eggs	2oz raisins
2 Tblsp Sugar	Little butter
	Nutmeg

Method

*Beat eggs into milk and add sugar - put in pie-dish.
Cut bread into squares and butter them.
Lay on top of milk mixture and sprinkle with raisins then a little nutmeg and sugar.
Alternatively, vanilla flavouring can be added to milk or a little whiskey.
Bake in a very slow oven, standing in a shallow meat dish with boiling water about 1 1/2 deep.
Cooking time 2-2 1/2 hours.*

Joe Scala:

We always stayed up late on New Year's Eve and kissed each other, wished each other Happy New Year. My dad had one of the very first radios. When we had a radio in Branner Street on New Year's Eve all the neighbours used to come and look at it and watch it. My dad used to let them in and listen to it sometimes. Big old trumpet, great big horn thing.

James Beckett:

New Year was a big time then. We made a lot of seeing the New Year in. In the south here they'd never heard of it. In fact when I first left Barrow in the 1920s and I came down to Coventry I couldn't get over it - they worked New Year's Day. In Barrow I can always remember, on New Year you had to go outside, take a piece of coal and go around the block, then wait until they'd let you in. For years I let the year in, Mother wouldn't have anybody else. Nobody would get in to the house unless I'd been there first. You could go to the other houses as well. They wanted a dark fellow to let the New Year in. There were a couple of widows on their own and I had to let the New Year in there. Supplied my own coal and went round.

Margaret Kippin:

As a child, and then when we got older, we used to go to the Watch-night service at church, which was just a New Year Service at midnight. You'd hold hands to bring in the New Year.

Daisy Cook:

Always kept New Year up. All sitting in the evening and drinking and then seeing the New Year in. Go out, banging dustbin lids and everything. Noise, whatever you could make. All up the street they'd be out, banging dustbin lids. We all used to have some food ready, always, sandwiches all cut up, and a nice bottle of whisky ready. They'd come round as soon as it was after midnight. The knock would come on the door, you'd be waiting for them to come in. Straight away they'd sit down and have sandwiches and a drink and have a little chat. Then they'd go on to somewhere else.

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Screens and Magic Lanterns

Joe Scala:

There was some good clubs in Bermondsey. One particular one I joined was called The Fisher. Still in existence today. In the old days it was an old warehouse, not far from where it is now - a tiny, little narrow street right near Tower Bridge and Tooley Street, a big old warehouse. We had a top floor in this place and it was open at night for kids, poor kids, to go. They had about four billiard tables, table tennis and a library. You had a book out and brought it back next week. You always started by kneeling down and saying some prayers. The man who ran it was a man called Captain Rogers, an ex-military man - white moustache, trimmed up, nice checked shirts and cravats. He and his wife were very educated people, beautiful clothes. They ran it with a man called Mr Kirkpatrick. He was always up there. He just walked about and watched the boys playing snooker. It wasn't bad because they used to turn the hot water pipe on at the top. I can never remember being cold up there.

The cinemas in those days were packed. All the time. The Elephant and Castle, The Trocadero. It held 3,000 people. It was packed, the whole of the pavement outside, right down the road and round the corner. That was to get in. It kept you warm and it was entertainment. We used to call it The Troc. Some years later they built The Trocette in Tower Bridge Road. It was only about half a mile away, owned by the same people.

Another place to keep warm was the Music Hall. There was The Gaieties, there was The Camberwell Palace and The Trocadero. In between each film show you had about an hour entertainment on stage. The organ - the mighty Wurlitzer! I can remember seeing people like Sophie Tucker. That would be the 30s.

Bill Winter:

Every Wednesday night they used to have a person who would come in to give a magic lantern show in the church. It was like still television. It was very much like going into a cinema but you sat in the pews of the church with a screen up in the centre and he'd be at the back with a little megaphone telling you that he'd visited this place and he'd come down and he'd show you the animals that were there, the people that were there. I think they used to do it because missionary type people go into the church and so a lot of it used to be from Africa and of course for the kids, you know, it was marvellous, wasn't it? They'd teach us things in books but they was always in black and white or in brown and white, sepia colour. It was very seldom you got printed in colour.

We used to go to Saturday afternoon matinees at the pictures. You used to still get recorded music coming up if you didn't have the organ. There was a Trocadero which has now been pulled down and opposite was the ABC Regal, that is still there. There used to be the Trocette which was a smaller version, this was why they called it the Trocette as against the Trocadero. It was owned by the same people. But the one that to my mind had more character was the Star. It used to be a music hall and then they turned it into a cinema. The music hall was still running then but not in the Star.

Margaret Kippin:

Of course we did go to church functions, too, in the evenings. I used to go magic lantern shows, when you put slides up on a screen, still pictures, you see. We thought it was wonderful - we thought it was great. It was usually at the church. My brother actually saved up and got a small magic lantern, and he'd have his friends in. And you'd get all sorts of pictures, and put them in.

James Beckett:

We used to have magic lantern shows. We used to have to pay to go to a show. I was fortunate being an only child and I had a magic lantern. In those days to get something that moved was something. I used to have slides and see them. Acrobats were on there. I used to have all the lads in.

Then we'd go to the pictures more often in the winter. For fourpence you could get a good seat. Tuppence for the cheaper seat but for fourpence you'd get a good seat. Used to have Tom Mix and those things on. Used to go twice a week to the pictures. Saturday morning was for the kiddies, special programmes on.

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Shivering in School

Joyce Milan:

When we got to school in the morning we'd have to do all the exercises, the first thing we did - in a bitterly cold playground. We had to do all this running and jumping and rubbing our hands and stamping our feet. I can remember everybody's breath being sort of frozen on the cold air, and people rubbing their hands and stamping their feet, really just to keep your blood circulating. We did that every morning, and I remember how cold that playground was!

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In the classroom there were some hot water pipes which were inadequate - totally inadequate - to one side of the classroom. This wasn't an old school. It was a school built four or five years after the estate, so it was a comparatively modern school for those days. But

there was a school that I went to down in Plumstead: we had what I called a 'smoky soda' fire in the corner of the classroom, with a big stack piled up. I can remember that, with a big guard round it.

I wore Wellingtons to school but I used to take plimsolls, and change when I got there. But the schools were cold as well! There was milk at school. I think I had to pay a ha'penny for mine, because we weren't all that poor as my dad was in work. And in the cold weather it used to freeze and the cream used to pop out of the top of the bottle, about an inch out, like ice cream, it was so cold.

Elsie House:

We had coal fires in the school, big fireplaces with big fires going all day. We was lovely and warm in school.

Daisy Cook:

It was cold at school, very cold. If it got very cold they used to tell us to keep our coats on. If your hands got so cold you had a job to do anything. But they used to make us put our coats on and get in the playground and keep running round, to warm ourselves up, and then we'd all go back in class for a little while. They did have poor heating though. A big fire going in one of the halls. You didn't get much heating in the classrooms at all.

Joe Scala:

I went to a school named The School of The English Martyrs. They say it was very well named because by the time you left there you was a martyr. This was in Rodney Road in Southwark. It was a tough school. Schools weren't like they are today, a different kind of toughness. It was the sort of school where you could have a fight with a fellow but if he fell on the floor you had to wait for him to get

up. There was no putting boots in or sticking knives in. If you kick a fellow that would be the end. No one would ever talk to you again, ever. They were hard kids.

Winters I can remember because the heating wasn't very good in them big old council schools. This was a great big building right at the end of Rodney Road, right next door to the Police station (which was very convenient at times). We had cold winters. We'd sit in classes and, in those days, most of the kids' haircuts were just clippers over the top. If you came from a family that was in business, like my people had five fish and chip shops, I was thought of as one of the wealthy people of the day. At least I could go and have fish and chips for my dinner every day. Some kids had it really hard. The haircut was clippers all over and it cost you a penny. If your parents were inclined to spend tuppence, like my parents used to, then they'd cut it nice and a little fringe at the front. You could always see someone who had a tuppenny haircut or a penny haircut. Most of the kids always had this haircut, winter and summer.

We used to have milk at school. I think it was about a penny and you got just under half a pint of milk. Special size that they delivered to schools. If you had the money you got it and if you didn't have the money you didn't get it. No free milk. My dad often used to say to me - because he'd often had it hard - he'd give me two pennies and say, "If there's another boy there wants a bottle of milk get him one." My dad often did that. I did but sometimes when I could I'd drop the penny in somebody's pocket. Like one particular fellow, I've dropped many a penny in his pocket. He knew where it was coming from alright.

Fortunately my parents always wrapped me up and I was always warm. In my class kids would come in and most of the kids wore their brother's old clothes. No socks and they wore boots, because boots lasted a long time and they cost about two shillings a pair, great big hob-nail boots. It was cold. I can particularly remember one day

a teacher who had a grudge against this kid. The kid was no older than me, we might have been ten. Round about that age when we could think things up and scheme things and tell lies properly, so we must have been about ten. This kid used to sit across the classroom to me and he came in one day and he was very, very poor. He had a brother and they shared their clothes, although they were different sizes they shared their clothes. One day he came in with a pink overcoat on, which was unheard-of. Kids' coats in those days were dark grey or black and that was it. Obviously it was a girl's coat, one of his sister's coats, because it was cold. He had a scarf and muffler underneath. You could see this little kid with a bald head and a muffler and a tight fitting pink overcoat. This teacher didn't like him. He said, "My mum said I've got to keep it on." The teacher said, "Take it off." "My mum said I'll catch me death of cold if I take it off." "Take it off at once." Anyway he took it off and under that coat he didn't have anything on. He had a pair of trousers on, he didn't have a vest on. He had a scarf and a coat. That's all he had on. He was bare from the waist up. This is in the winter. This poor kid he was picked on a bit. The teacher said, "Where's your clothes?" He said, "My mum's washing them." That was it. He let him put his coat back on again, obviously, because he was getting more laughs with his coat off than he was with it on. It just shows you the sort of poverty that some of them lived in.

Another time, same kid. He kept sniffing and teacher said, "Stop sniffing." He said, "I can't help it, I've got a cold." "Go and get your handkerchief. Use your handkerchief." He said, "It's in the cloakroom, sir. In my coat in the cloakroom." "Well go and get it. I don't want you sniffing in here." Off he went. And this fellow had a very inventive brain, he was in a scrape every day. For no reason other than he was poor, I suppose. Off he went to the cloakroom and he came back, blowing his nose, on this great big silk handkerchief. It was about two foot long and nearly as wide. It was a long, funny shape. "Is that your handkerchief?"

"Yes, sir. That's all I've got, sorry." "Right, sit down." Anyway we got through the day okay. He got the cane a couple of times for something else during the day. When it was time to go home there was another kid, Finnis. (He wore spectacles. No-one wore glasses in those days - if you wore glasses you were a sissy.) This kid went out and got his coat and there was a scream, and we all ran out to the cloakroom where this kid was. The teacher said, "What's the matter with you, son?" He held his coat up and the lining was ripped right out. Half the lining and that's where the other fellow had got his handkerchief from! He had to get a handkerchief or get the cane so he had the lining out of this poor Finnis' coat.

At play-time because it was cold we didn't sit about doing nothing or sit chatting in corners, because we were cold. All our games were boisterous, all fighting and jumping about, kicking each other, very boisterous in general, just boys now in the playground - the girls had the other half of the school.

Once a week we would go swimming. We used to go to Manor Place baths at The Elephant and Castle - very famous in its day. It's still there but I don't know what it is now. In those days there was boxing, fighters from the East End. They boarded the baths over every time they had boxing. When we used to go swimming there we'd be cold. Every Wednesday we got our trunks. When we got there they'd give you a towel and you handed it in when you go out. We'd go there and the beautiful thing was when you jumped in it was warm water. If you jumped in you could just stand there. You were warm as long as you got down to your chin. If your shoulders were out you felt a bit cold. You'd shiver. Some kids were afraid of the water. They'd get in, under sufferance, and they'd get out and stand shivering on the side. They were all wet and freezing and nearly turning into ice. One of the joys of that was that when we came out we'd go across the road. There used to be a baker's shop on the corner. If you could get Mum to

give you a penny you'd get a pennyworth of broken biscuits. They used to give you a great big bag of broken biscuits. I always had a penny. I was rich - I had a penny off Mum. We used to share them out and eat them.

Lillian Burnett:

Yes, it was cold, but we did have a great big fire, but it took a long time for the man to come and feed it up again. We didn't have radiators, not where I was at school.

Margaret Kippin:

One of our teachers was very health-conscious - first of all, she used to open the window. Then you had to get your handkerchief out and blow your nose hard. And if you didn't have a handkerchief, heaven help you. If kids just had a dirty bit of rag, she'd often make fun of them. And then you had to put your hands on your ribs, and breathe in, and then hold it, and then out. And the idea was that it cleared your head for the day. And then you got on with your work.

When I lived in Scotland, we had nearly two miles to walk to school, and very countrified it was, so we'd had exercise before we got there. I remember I fainted one day when I got to school, and I was only about eight. It was the first time in my life, and I didn't even know what was happening to me. And my mother said - and I think she was probably right - it was the excess cold. This particular teacher used to make us stand round her desk for morning prayers, and I can always remember it, because she was going to her desk to get the strap for me, because she thought I was messing around. And I was going to get the strap, you know. I really didn't know what was happening to me. And the next thing I knew, I was on the ground, and they told my brother to take me home, so I had to walk back again! But I do remember the extremes of cold.

Winter Work

Hilda Kennedy:

When I worked in the paint factory it was freezing. There was no heating, it wasn't allowed, and we all used to stand there and it was so cold you could hardly walk. To keep my feet warm I used to put brown paper in my shoes and that seemed to make it warmer but I had chilblains. We never complained because that's how it was at the factory, there was no heating allowed. Oh we was terribly exploited. No matter how old you was, until you were twenty-one you never got the right money, though you worked more than the older ones. They'd always put me on the end. "Go on the end, you're younger than me, you go there," and I'd be going up and down all day. My hands were freezing, but running up and down like that kept me a bit warmer I suppose.



Lee High Road, with the "Rose of Lee" public house, in the 1930s.

John Butler:

There were some days when you couldn't work, it'd snow and that sort of thing. Then when I was a boy on the firm, you'd be in there cleaning out paint kettles and tidying the workshop, sweeping snow away and that sort of thing. But at the same time we did have to work when it was cold and one of the worst jobs I remember was guttering, when it was the old cast iron guttering. You'd get a six-foot length of cast iron gutter, that's quite heavy, and we'd probably be sent out to do a job with the old truck, you know, ladders and things on it. We used to push it as far as St Mary Cray on some of the jobs. And then the man who I'd be working with, he'd say, "Oh well look we want two lengths of guttering" and you'd be sent off on your bike which you'd be taking with you on your truck and go down to the builders' merchants and get that - that was damned heavy and cold. You know, cast iron, cold.

All the painters used to come out when the spring came. They'd been suffering right through the winter, couldn't work and all that sort of thing. But, come the spring, people used to work in the bigger houses and spring cleaning and all the outside work.

Lil Patrick:

My dad was a building worker and in the winter time if he was working they'd be on the short time because of the daylight. They would be on what they call daylight working six weeks before Christmas and six weeks after they were on the short days. Then maybe they couldn't work because it was absolutely tipping down with rain or snowing or freezing so they wouldn't be able to use the cement or concrete they were working on.

And the docks were affected too because, Surrey Docks especially, most of the stuff on the boats there

came from Scandinavia and they'd start getting frozen in and they wouldn't thaw out any more till about February or March so there was very little work and the men were stood off for months or they had to go on the pier and they were sent home again as there was no work for them to do, no ships to unload as they were all frozen in.

Bill Belsham:

My father used to keep a supply of old sacks and he used to have that round the soles of his shoes. Well you didn't really have the clothing then that chaps are issued with now on site. You just wore as many pullovers as you could get hold of, vests and all the rest of it. Any old coat you got. If it was below freezing, then you couldn't concrete. You couldn't lay bricks. If it thawed during the day you could knock up your stuff and lay bricks. If it froze again that night then the frost would get into the mortar before it set and the whole work would be ruined. It would go crumbly. And the same with concrete, of course. You just couldn't do anything in those conditions.

If work had been slack or the winter had come on, a lot of firms would get rid of what I suppose now you would almost call casual workers, but they would be on the books. You could go along to a man - which was an awful thing to do - on a Friday afternoon and say, "Sorry, I shan't want you after five this evening." An hour's notice was all you had to give a man and that was it and there he was with nothing. So a lot of the casual men took off all the winter I suppose and then during the winter, if you were a regular with the firm, you'd get sent home and wouldn't get paid.

Gwendoline Horn:

I suppose there were jobs my father just couldn't do in the snow and ice, could he. I don't think we were ever

hungry; we probably made up on suet puddings and apple pies and that sort of thing that my mother could make cheaply, and stews and soups and things, but there wouldn't be any meat. Builders weren't paid unless they were working.

Elsie House:

I used to take Dad's hot dinner round the building (St James' Avenue, where he was building houses), every lunchtime, and it was in between two tea towels. It was a suet pastry. My mum used to say, "Keep it straight duck in case you spill the gravy" - a big soup plate, and a flat one, another one on the top and it was well packed up with the two tea towels tied on top and we used to have to hold it by the knot on top - and he

Joyce Milan's SYRUP AND LEMON PUDDING

Ingredients

18oz plain flour	1 pinch salt
4oz suet	1 lemon
1 tsp baking powder	Golden syrup

Method

Mix flour, suet, salt and baking powder in a bowl and add enough water to make soft dough so that you can knock it off spoon with a sharp tap.

Well grease pudding basin (not metal). Put about 1 tbsp of mixture in the bottom.

Cut lemon into thin rounds and place a layer on mixture with 1 tbsp golden syrup, put another good tbsp of mixture on top and continue with layers of lemon, syrup and pudding mixture to fill basin, ending with pudding mixture.

Cover with greaseproof paper or a pudding cloth as for Steak and Kidney recipe and cook for 4 hours in a saucepan of boiling water two thirds of way up side of basin.

When cooked turn upside down onto warm plate and shake basin to loosen pudding. Lemon juice and syrup will run down the sides of pudding. Serve with hot custard.

used to eat that every dinner time. He had to have his hot dinner at half past twelve and I used to have to wait for the whistle to blow before he could knock off and come down and get it. He might be up on the ladder bricklaying. Then he brought his plates back at night for the next day. He was well looked after my dad was. And we'd take him a sandwich for his mid-morning break and he'd always bring me a piece home of bread and cheese, bit of bread and cheese. I can still taste it, it'd be in his pocket all day.

There were times when Dad'd walk round looking to see if he could find work. He used to walk miles, my dad, with his tools on his back looking for work. He was a wonderful bricklayer. Anybody knows him in Elmers End and Beckenham because he built a lot of houses out there. He used to worry about us kids, feeding all us kids. The neighbours were good, you shared everything. They shared a jug of soup with you and if we got a bucket of coal and they hadn't got any coal next door my dad used to say, "They got any coal next door?" and we'd say, "No." He'd say, "Give them half of what we got." And that's how they got by, they shared everything. Neighbours shared, nobody went without.



Man seeking work, 1930s

Bill Gibson:

My recollection of the winter days in those days was my dad driving a horse and cart, and getting the horses with a full load over Tower Bridge used to be a sight in itself - the poor horses used to slip sometimes, and it was a devil of a job to get them out. There is a bit of a slope on Tower Bridge. Sometimes they had to be destroyed; if they broke a leg or something, they had to be put down there and then.

Bill Winter:

My father was a docker. He was in Number One Gang and they were the first gang to be called off in the morning. They used to go down there around seven o'clock in the morning to be called off, as they termed it. The man would come round with the agent working for a particular shipping line, or whichever, and turn round and say, "Right, I want the first gang, six boats, be working such and such a boat," you know, and they'd all shove their card up in the air. 'Cause they had to have cards to be called off. Although it was not a permanent job 'cause you could be called off by different firms, you had to have a card to say that you belonged to a particular type. It wasn't just that you had a card, you had to have a card for that particular type of work.



A frosty day, and those without work queue for employment pay.

There'd be porters, dockers, lighterage men. There were some people who could work on boats, some people who could work on boats and barges and some people who could only work on timber - in Surrey Docks they used to have a big timber import company. Dad started off in that and then he became a docker. Then, if the timber wasn't in, very few people got work, because if there wasn't a lot of timber it was because of bad weather. Some of it did get frozen up.

Joe Scala:

My grandfather's shop in Tower Bridge Road was called The Tower Bridge Palace. The hood over the fish range had a mosaic of fishermen dragging their netting in the sea - a Neapolitan scene. Their preparation room was the cellar, down some stone steps in the yard at the back. Your fish would come in boxes all full up with ice. You never bought a box kippered or filleted, all done for you - you went up Billingsgate Market and picked out what you wanted. An hour later it was at home. You had to get it out the box and clean it all. You were handling ice all the time. You were always, always cold, summer and winter, in the fish game.

Olive Smith:

It was about mid October, 1941 and I was in the ATS, I was on guns. We'd taken over from an all-male battery because we were a heavier mixed battery and we arrived up there dog tired. It was evening time, it was getting dark and we had trestles - wooden trestles with just plain wood, with a bit at the bottom and a headrest at the top for beds. We were marched round to the Nissan hut which was full, absolutely crammed full of straw. We had to fill our palliasses and that was our bedding and we also had an old, knobbly hard thing for a pillow and two blankets, no sheets.

The allocation a day was a bucket of coal, just one, and there were about twelve of us in a Nissan Hut and the heating, the sole heating, was a stove with a pipe going up through the centre. That's all we had. We used to nip out very often to pinch the extra coal that used to be away from the main area where the Nissan hut is. You used to go over there perhaps after lights out, about 11 o'clock at night. If you were caught you went on a charge.

We soon got through our bucket of coal as the weather got colder and we started to take off pieces of wood from the beds to light the fire and straw and one thing and another. We burnt practically everything, the wooden bed and the straw. The straw was for lighting it, for starting it off. We bashed one girl up because she wouldn't part with any of her straw - she was the only one who had two palliasses of straw. We were going to hit her but she got frightened you see, so we helped ourselves to straw and took a couple of pieces of wood from the bed. We finished up, I suppose it must have been after four or five months or something like that, we had virtually no straw in our palliasses - mine was about half an inch thick and there was no head rest on the bed and just a couple of rungs of wood. It was through that that they eventually brought in the metal truckle beds, and then we went from there to proper little mattresses with sheets and pillow cases which we changed by the month.

Manmohan Kaur Sandhu:

I worked very hard when I came here in 1961. I worked in a pickle factory for two years, putting pickles in bottles, until 1963. Eight pounds a week - not very good. I started at seven thirty in the morning, finished five thirty in the evening. They were very long hours for eight pounds, and very cold. We were so cold that we had to throw hot water over our shoes to keep our feet warm, in the factory! There was this tap,

and we used to wash our hands, and we used to take the same water and put it on our feet. All Asian workers were the same. It was just for the outside of the rubber shoes, to keep the rubber shoes warm, because the feet were like ice.

We used to lift cold onions with our fingers, and they really were very cold. Fresh onions. I needed the money, so I had to work, and there were few jobs.

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