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**'RATIONING HAS NOT MADE ME LIKE MARGARINE'
FOOD AND SECOND WORLD WAR IN BRITAIN:
A MASS OBSERVATION TESTIMONY**

Natacha Chevalier

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy in Contemporary History

University of Sussex
January 2016

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree

Signature.....

University of Sussex

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Contemporary History

‘Rationing Has Not Make Me Like Margarine’.¹

Food and Second World War in Britain: A Mass Observation Testimony

Summary

This thesis enhances our understanding of the British Kitchen Front through the examination of primary sources from Mass Observation Archive. It illuminates the everyday life of civilians, the impact of the war food restrictions on their eating habits and practices, but also on their perspectives and behaviours. Moreover, it argues that while the food practices of these civilians were modified by the wartime rationing and food scarcity, other factors of influence, namely social class, personal and familial circumstances and time were critical regarding eating habits, food choice and priorities. In order to conduct this research and respond to the difficulties presented by the sources examined, a tailor-made method of data extraction, categorisation and analysis has been designed. Using the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this method allowed an unusual quantitative treatment of massive qualitative data, the creation of measurable and comparable figures as well as their qualitative contextualisation. It was found that scarcity of food effectively modified the diet of the diarists, but also their actions and their perspective. The food difficulties generated new behaviours, some unlikely to have existed prior to the war, and modified relationships. The value of food changed as well, modifying its role in private and public sphere. However, as argued, the social class and the familial status of the diarists were a key dimension of the management and perception of the food situation, influencing their choice, decision and priorities as well as their response to it. The passing of time also proved to be influential regarding the adaptation and the evolution of the opinion and feelings of the diarists. Rather than drastically challenging the existent literature, the present research suggests that some interpretative differences concerning the Home Front experience could be the result of a variation of focus and of sources employed, indicating the need to enlarge the historical perspective, to include more in depth analysis of qualitative data, and to take into account the factors of influence presented into this work.

¹ MOA DR 1553 Reply to April 1943 Directive

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This thesis is at the same time the result of a lonely process and a team achievement as without my husband Jonas, it would simply not exist. Jonas has my greatest gratitude for having been so supportive (morally, financially and very patiently) but also for the software he created especially for this research, offering his time and his computing genius to my study. He deserves more than I could ever give him in return for his help. I have also a debt to the rest of my family. My children Judy-Ashley and Victor, my grand-children, Yvan and Océane, as well as my mother, Jacqueline and my stepfather, Louis, have my gratitude and apologies for having to share my attention and my time with a thesis that took their mother, grand-mother and daughter away for so long.

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The testimonies found in Mass Observation are the essence of my work. Therefore, this thesis is dedicated to its founders and to all these civilians who took the time to answer questionnaires and to write a diary in spite of the difficulties, offering us today these remarkable sources.

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Introduction

Introduction

In September 1939 ca. 48 millions people living in Britain saw their lives disrupted by what became known as the Second World War. Amongst them eight ordinary British civilians decided to recount their wartime experience. Along with a thousand or so other volunteers, they wrote a wartime diary for Mass Observation. Today, their narratives offer material of inestimable value for the comprehension of everyday life of the Home Front, including, as studied in the present thesis, the challenge posed by the wartime food restrictions.

The food situation in Britain during the war has been studied already.² However, these studies are usually concerned with rationing, nutrition, public health, and food policies.³ Moreover, they concentrate chiefly on the working class. In consequence, a detailed study of everyday wartime life that takes into account the middle-class and their wartime food experience is mostly absent of the historiography.⁴ Thus, this thesis investigates the effect of the war restrictions and food scarcity on the diet and eating habits of these Mass Observation diarists and middle-class contemporary witnesses, but also the evolution of their perception and behaviours. However, because food is not only about subsistence, but also expresses our cultural and social identity as well as our personal and societal circumstances at any given time, this thesis also seeks to establish the influence of social class, familial status and the passage of time on their food priorities.⁵ Thereby, in addition

² For instance: Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. *Austerity in Britain : Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939-1955*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000; Oddy, Derek. *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food : British Diet from the 1890s to the 1990s*. Rochester NY: Boydell Press, 2003; Wilt, Alan. *Food for War : Agriculture and Rearmament in Britain Before the Second World War*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

³ Trentmann, Frank, and Flemming Just. *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 2.

⁴ By Middle-class it is understood 'those between the rich and the poor' whose occupation, income, housing, education and other criteria related to their standard of living affiliate them to one of the sub-categories of this socio-economic group, namely lower, middle-middle or upper middle class. The concept of Middle-class and the criteria of determination will be further discussed in Chapter I, Part II.

⁵ Fischler, Claude. "Food Habits, Social Change and the Nature/Culture Dilemma." *Social Sciences Information* 19, no. 6 (1980): 937–53; Scholliers, Peter. *Food, Drink and Identity Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001. Consulted 15 January 2013,

to offering new historical material and new data of interest regarding the British wartime everyday life and food situation, this study demonstrates that adaptation to wartime food circumstances was a multi-dimensional process, a point to be taken into account in the recounting of the Home Front experience more broadly.

Why such an interest in food and such a focus on the middle-classes? As mentioned, the secondary literature on the wartime food restrictions paid more attention to the lower classes and their diet than to the wartime eating habits of the middle-classes. This is regrettable as the difference between working-class and middle-class food practices is noteworthy.⁶ As stated by the food sociologist Alan Warde, tastes and preference in consumption have 'long been symbolically significant among the middle class in Britain'.⁷ This symbolic significance reveals itself through different practices and was manifest in pre-war eating habits as demonstrated by pre-war social surveys.⁸ The middle-class diet was richer, healthier and showed more variety than the working class one, with a higher consumption of protein rich food, fruit and vegetables. In consequence, the reduction of food importation, the rationing and the shortage or disappearance of many of their usual ingredients added to the increase of price was deeply felt by this social group, especially by those belonging to the middle-middle and lower-middle classes who could not afford to eat out or buy food 'under the counter' on a regular basis. Thus, in order to get a more complete picture of the wartime food experience and its consequences, a deeper analysis of this particular social group and its wartime food experience is needed.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=74926>, 7–9; For an extensive historiography, see Murcott, pp. 1–33 Murcott, Anne, Warren James Belasco, and Peter Jackson. *The Handbook of Food Research*, 2013.

⁶ Holm, Lotte. "Sociology of Food Consumption." In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 334–5.

⁷ Warde, Alan. *Consumption, Food, and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997, 114.

⁸ Crawford, William, and Herbert Broadley. *The People's Food*,. London: Heinemann, 1938; Massey, Philip. "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households in 1938–39." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 105, no. 3 (1942): 159–96.

As for the interest in food, it is easily justifiable. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto reminds us that 'Food is universal and fundamental' and 'It is what matters most to most people, most of the time.'⁹ Indeed, every single human being, whatever their gender, colour, status, or income, shares with the others a basic physical requirement: without eating and drinking he or she will die. In addition, malnourishment also has significant consequences on health, the quality of life and its longevity. However, beyond survival, food is related to multiple aspects of our existence. Food choices, tastes, and distastes tell us about our cultural and social belonging, reflecting our identity, our self. As stated by Carole Counihan: 'Food is life, and life can be studied and understood through food'.¹⁰ Hence, a study of the wartime everyday life through the lens of food makes perfect sense.

Sources and Methodology

A variety of material including reports and survey from Mass Observation has been used in this study. However, two particular primary sources have been analysed in depth: the 248 replies to a questionnaire conducted in April 1943 about the impact of the war on eating habits and eight wartime diaries.

The first source was part of the questionnaire (called a Directive) sent monthly to Mass Observation volunteers. These questionnaires, which aimed to collect comprehensive observations as well as opinions on wartime and personal issues from the volunteers, provide a huge variety of qualitative material and information about wartime experiences.¹¹ For this study, a tailor-made methodology was designed in order to treat these qualitative sources.¹² Hence, the replies of the 248 respondents were examined, the relevant information extracted and categorised before being analysed, taking into account their context (for instance, the fact that the war and the food situation improved in 1943

⁹ Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Food: A History*. London: Macmillan, 2001, viii.

¹⁰ Counihan, Carole. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1997, 1.

¹¹ Courage, Fiona. "The National Panel Responds: Mass-Observation Directives 1939-1945." *Mass Observation Online*, Consulted 24 July 2012, <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/essays/content/TheNationalPanelRespon ds.aspx>

¹² A detailed presentation of this methodology is given in the first part of this thesis.

had an influence on the perspective of respondents and consequently their replies, as discussed in the chapter II).¹³

While the choice of the replies was driven by the theme of the directive in April 1943, the diaries were selected through an eliminatory procedure based on the relevance of their content. Similarly to the replies, their data has been extracted and categorised before being analysed using a specifically designed methodology. In both case, my interest in them derived from the information they offered on the wartime food situation and the response of the volunteers to it. Very different from each other, the two sets of data have distinct functions in this study. The analysis of the replies provides information about the respondents' food habits in 1943. For instance, it offers specific data about the food situation at a given time that can be compared to the pre-war situation. The diaries on the other hand, offer a long term perspective on the wartime food situation as well as the war, the Home Front, and their personal experiences. They allow for the observation of the evolution of the diarists, their priorities and opinion in parallel to the war situation at home and abroad. While the similarities found between the diarists can be compared to the secondary literature, the differences offer material to discuss the various factors involved in their perception of the wartime food experience and their priorities.

The study of eight diaries and 248 questionnaires can not pretend to be representative of the impact of the war on the food practices of the whole population. However, as asserted by Icelandic historian Sigurður Magnússon, micro-history offers the possibility to engage with un-researched topics or to highlight view and opinion until then ignored, thus this study brings valuable data and analysis in the field.¹⁴ Secondly, as argued in this thesis, the response to a testing food situation is affected by pre-war habits, socio-economic and cultural factors. While such information does not usually appear in

¹³ The war and food situation also influenced the diarists as demonstrated by the significant decrease of their food mentions in 1943.

¹⁴ Magnússon, Sigurður Gylfi. "Tales of the Unexpected: The 'Textual Environment', Ego-Documents and a Nineteenth-Century Icelandic Love Story - An Approach in Microhistory." *Cultural and Social History* 12, no. 1 (2015), 78–9.

quantitative data, it can be found in individual narratives.¹⁵ Hence, it can be said that while the quantitative approach of the sources is essential to measure and compare the data in order to determine the main common issues and the main difference between the diarists, the qualitative analysis provide the context, the various perspective and the personal dimension that allow the understanding of the quantitative data. Finally, rich, in-depth qualitative data such as those analysed in this study are exceptional as they not only enlighten us on the everyday wartime life, but also its evolution in time. The diaries in particular offer a great insight about the motivations of the diarists to do what they do, as stated by Frank Trentmann:

Such case studies of people's response to scarcity and rationing are valuable as social histories. They also reveal the norms and traditions at work, or to put it more precisely, how individuals in developing new practices put norms and ideas *to work*, making sense of the world around them and guiding their own behaviour.¹⁶

Clearly, the material analysed has specificities that must be taken into account. Firstly, despite a restricted number of diaries, the quantity of their qualitative data is massive, with a vast variety of topics not related to food. This large quantity of qualitative data is a significant issue as their treatment is time consuming and can be overwhelming. In addition, choices have to be made regarding the data extracted from the sources, with the risk of missing important information or focusing exclusively on the researched topic to the detriment of other element that should be taken into account. Secondly, the

¹⁵ Brassley, Paul, and Angela Potter. "A View From the Top: Social Elites and Food Consumption in Britain, 1930s-1940s." In *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*, Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just eds., 223–42. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 233; Bloome, David, Dorothy Sheridan, and Brian V Street. "Reading Mass-Observation Writing: Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Researching the Mass-Observation Archive." *Mass-Observation Archive Occasional Paper No. 1*. Accessed July 27, 2012.

<http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/essays/content/readingMOwriting.aspx>; Pollen, Annebella. "Research Methodology in Mass Observation Past and Present: 'Scientifically, about as valuable as a chimpanzee's tea party at the zoo'?" *History Workshop Journal* 75, no. 1 (2013), 217, 220–1, 223.

¹⁶ Trentmann, Frank, and Flemming Just. *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 6.

interpretation of qualitative data can be subjective, potentially modifying the meaning of the diarists and consequently the result of the research.

These issues have been minimized by the methodology used. On the one hand, the anonymous process of selection for the diaries limited a biased choice of diarists; on the other hand the quantitative side of the mixed methodology used to treat the source helped to mitigate the personal interpretation of the testimonies. Moreover, this method, specifically design to manage these sources (explained in the next chapter) allowed me to structure efficiently the examination, extraction and categorisation of the information.

Main Findings

Qualitative and quantitative data were extracted from the sources and then analysed in relation with each other and other sources (both contemporary material and secondary literature). The quantitative material provided measurable and comparable data that allowed the evaluation of the significance of food in the narratives, the kind of impact the war had on the eating habits and the perspective of the volunteers and its evolution over time. As for the qualitative analyses, they are essential to contextualise the quantitative data set, to comprehend the wartime situation of these individuals and to determine the impact of the war on their day-to-day food practices as well as their feeling and opinions about it.¹⁷

The results of the data analysis can be classified in two categorises, the one I expected, and the ones that surprised me. In addition, while some results corroborate the historical recounting of the Home Front, others nuance or even challenge it.

The dullness of the wartime diet for example, is not called into question. Without many usual ingredients, monotony replaced variety in the kitchen of the diarists and most of the

¹⁷ For example, the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the complaints made about the food situation provide the number of complaints in relation with the number of comments about food and the evaluation and evolution of their importance in time, as well as the determination of the reasons to complaints and their evolution in time.

British population. The increase of starchy food consumption is not disputable either. Potatoes and bread became omnipresent in the diet of many as indicated in the sources. This increase of starchy food intake coupled with a decrease of meat, eggs, and dairy consumption and a general reduction of the variety of food eaten are all evidence of the levelling down of the middle-class diet and a shift toward a more working class one. Such findings challenges the idea that the narrowing of the nutritional gap between the lower and higher socio-economic groups resulted of the improvement of the working class eating habits and supports the argument of historians such as Oddy, Nelson or Zweiniger-Bargielowska.¹⁸ Indeed, while rationing and governmental measures possibly improved the nutritional intake of the underprivileged, the evidence found in the sources demonstrates a noticeable degradation of the middle-class diet, especially concerning the lower middle-class, unable to afford wartime price, restaurant and black market. The diet of the diarists degraded in quality, quantity and variety. Most of them lost weight and complained about health issues they related to the wartime nutritional regime. Interestingly though, while it was expected that protein rich food, especially rationed meat and bacon, would be a major source of grievance, the importance given to fruit was one of the main surprises of this research.

This focus on fruit by all the diarists and most of the respondent to the questionnaire indicates the significance of the social class influence on food choices and the pre-war eating habits in the study of the wartime diet and its perception. Food scarcity definitively modified the diarists' habits, perspective, behaviours and relationships as well as the value and the role of food in their lives. Food became a bargaining chip with family, friends or colleagues as well as a valuable gift and a mean to express love and concern. Short supply also created the frame for illegal purchase. According to the evidence found in the diaries, the black market was extensive, revealing the tension between desire, frustration, morality and legality. Nevertheless, while a new 'taste of necessity' emerged

¹⁸ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*; Nelson, Michael. "Social-Class Trends in British Diet, 1860-1980." In *Food, Diet and Economic Change Past and Present*, Catherine Geissler and Derek J. Oddy eds., 101-118. London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1993; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000.

from food scarceness, pre-war preferences and prejudices persisted. The occasional rejection of commodities unfavourably considered by higher classes as well as the food priorities and the evolution of their perspective and behaviours are all evidences of the major influence of social class, familial status and time on food practices.

The same can be said about communal feeding. According to the testimonies, they were little used or not used at all. The diarists did not take advantage of British Restaurants or canteens. While the wartime food restrictions modified eating habits at home, the evidence found in the narratives show that the place of eating did not change much. Those used to eating out continued to do so, while those who were not could occasionally eat in café or restaurant, but not on a regular basis. Such findings challenge the vision of catering as a source of unrationed food for the middle classes and reveal the importance of questioning the heterogeneity of this social group. While upper middle-class people could have the financial means to afford to eat out on a regular basis as prior to the war, those with limited income were greatly affected by the wartime price and taxes increase, and thus suffered from a more important degradation of their situation and diets and had less opportunities to compensate.

Another challenge to the popular picture of the kitchen front is the tendency of the diarists to 'do without' rather than making the effort to find substitute or to produce mock dishes. This form of adaptation is a reminder that wartime housewives had not much time to add such effort in their daily routine. The common idea that the war brought people together through sharing and a mutual assistance is also questioned by the results of this study as the development of a more opportunistic and self-centred perspective is noticeable in the testimonies. Moreover, mutual assistance was given primarily to the close family and friends of the diarists. Interestingly, a new or extended cooperation between spouses is also perceptible, at least concerning food supply.

These results are all evidence of the complexity of a study related to food in time of crisis. Indeed, food is by no mean a topic simple to explore. Its multiple dimensions request a multi-disciplinary approach. In addition, it demands to be contextualised. As stated by Sydney Mintz: 'Social phenomena are by their nature historical [...]. The relationships amongst events in one "moment" can never been abstracted from their past and future setting.'¹⁹ Therefore, the pre-war and wartime food situation as well as the specificities of middle-class eating habits need to be presented. Hence, a large variety of secondary literature related to British history, Food Studies, sociology and anthropology has been used in this thesis. This secondary literature plays various roles in this research. As explained above, it allows the contextualisation of the topic, the time and the circumstances. Additionally, it offers theoretical frameworks, explicative dimensions as well as elements to compare with the primary sources analysed and, regarding specifically food in wartime, interesting historical debates to explore.

Secondary literature

The narrative of the wartime food experience, either found in general accounts of the Home Front or historical studies about food in Britain, has been mostly based on official archives written by those who made and administrated food policy rather than from those affected by such regulations.²⁰ Furthermore, these accounts (usually a fraction of a wider study) have been made by social historians primarily interested in the impact of the war on British society.²¹ In addition, wartime food circumstances have also been used as a lens to study wider issues such as gender, social inequality or post-war changes.²² In

¹⁹ Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Sweetness and Power*. New York, NY: Viking, 1985, xxx.

²⁰ Longmate is an exception as his aim was to tell the everyday story of the population. His work is mainly based on people's souvenirs of their wartime experiences. However, his sources are not contemporary but afterward recollection (so subject to distortion of memory) that are presented in the book and not deeply analysed. Longmate, Norman. *How We Lived Then : A History of Everyday Life During the Second World War*. London: Pimlico, [1971] 2002; Longmate, Norman. *The Home Front : An Anthology of Personal Experience, 1938-1945*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1981.

²¹ Calder, Angus. *The Peoples War : Britain 1939-1945*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1969; Marwick, Arthur. *The Home Front: The British and the Second World War*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.

²² See for instance: Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. "Housewifery." In *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska ed., Harlow: Longman, 2001, 149–64. Harlow: Longman, 2001; Rose, Sonya O. *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939-1945*. Oxford; New York: Oxford

consequence, not much has been written on the impact of rationing and scarcity on the eating habits of the population (particularly the middle-classes) and rarely from the testimonies of those directly affected by these policy and restrictions.²³

Of course, knowledge of these issues is essential as the implementation of food policy modified the life of the population. For instance, in the work of reference *People's war*, Calder provides essential information about the measures taken by the Government. In this extensive research, Calder provides a chronological account of the Second World War, data and figures about rationing and other information helping the understanding of the wartime food situation. Later publications supplemented this information with additional data and/or additional qualitative material that offer some insight of the impact of food regulation on the everyday wartime life.²⁴

Meant to avoid shortage, control inflation and provide food adequately to the population while sparing resources, a range of policies regulating food production, distribution and price were implemented during the war.²⁵ However, the one food policy mainly discussed by social historians is rationing. Such interest is comprehensible: rationing affected the whole population and, from a social history perspective, it represented the ultimate embroilment of the government on the everyday life and intimacy of the British household, as well as a tool of democratisation of the British society.²⁶

The impact of rationing (coupled with other governmental measures) has primarily been related to an improvement of the nutrition and health of the population in the literature.²⁷ Indeed, a general consensus about the success of rationing and communal

University Press, 2003; Gardiner, Juliet. *Wartime : Britain, 1939-1945*. London: Headline, 2004.

²³ Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 223–4.

²⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*; Gardiner, *Wartime*.

²⁵ Nash, E.F. "Wartime Control of Food and Agricultural Prices." In *Lessons of the British War Economy*, D.N. Chester ed., 200-238, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951, 200.

²⁶ Farmer, Richard. "Food Fight! The Cinema of Consumption in Wartime Britain." *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History* 12 (2008), 2–3.

²⁷ Calder, *The People's War*, 404–5; Burnett, John. *Plenty and Want : A Social History of Diet in England from*

feeding and more particularly the health benefits of food control, the governmental measures and the nutritional campaigns seems to have been originated from these earlier studies. A substantial number of studies demonstrating the need for a more nuanced approach have been published.²⁸ Nonetheless, the positive outcomes of food control is still emphasised in the popular and academic understanding of wartime food restrictions as indicated by scholastic works or journal articles.²⁹

Derek Oddy in *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food* and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska in *Austerity in Britain* re-visited this idealistic vision of the wartime diet with convincing argument and evidence. For example, Oddy discusses the unbalance between the wartime calories intake and physical energy requirements resulting from the war effort (longer hours, night fire watch and so on) and the health degradations resulting from such damageable deficit in time.³⁰ As for Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, she declares that the health of the population did not severely degrade. Nevertheless, she notes that the vital statistics used to assert health improvement were mostly about infant and maternal mortality as no real research was conducted on adult, establishing the weakness of claims based on such limited data.³¹

1815 to the Present Day. Rev. ed. London: Scolar Press, 1979; Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 1971.

²⁸ David Smith for instance, reevaluates the impact of scientists in the wartime diet conception, while James Vernon demonstrates the small effect of nutritional propaganda on eating habits of the lower classes. Smith, David. *Food, Science, Policy, and Regulation in the Twentieth Century : International and Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2000, 112–3; Smith, Harold. *War and Social Change : British Society in the Second World War*. Wolfeboro NH: Manchester University Press, 1986.; Vernon, James. *Hunger : A Modern History*. London England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007, 229–33.

²⁹ See for instance: Joyner, Jennifer. "From Bread and Jam to Woolton Pie: Food Rationing and Improved Nutrition in WWII." History Undergraduate Theses Paper 8, University of Washington - Tacoma Campus, 2014; Lightowler, Helen, and Helen Macbeth. "Nutrition, Food Rationing and Home Production in the UK during the Second World War." In *Food in Zones of Conflict: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Paul Collinson and Helen Macbeth. Vol. 8. Anthropology of Food and Nutrition. New York: Berghahn Book, 2014; Rohrer, Finlo. "Should We Bring Back Rationing?" *BBC News Magazine*, January 7, 2010, consulted February 08, 2015, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8445824.stm>; Williams, Zoe. "Could Rationing Hold the Key to Today's Food Crisis?" *The Guardian*, consulted February 8, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/24/food-rationing-crises-public-health-problem-obesity-hunger-big-government>.

³⁰ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 142–7.

³¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. "Fair Shares? The Limits of Food Policy in Britain during Second World War." In *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska; Rachel Duffett; Alain Drouard Ashgate eds., London: Ashgate, 2011, 133.

Both authors demonstrate the importance of specifics (age, time, occupation) regarding food practices and the impact of the wartime diet. For instance, social class is particularly relevant regarding an important wartime issue, the unfairness of distribution of food.³² The fact that flat-rate rationing was favourable to white collar workers and families and unfavourable to manual workers and single persons was recognised during the war itself by those who implemented the rationing and is not a source of historical debate.³³ However, the prime unfairness of distribution, and the most resented one by the population, was related to the inequality of financial means. As stated by Calder: 'The upper-middle-class remained more equal than the working class. Food was the most obvious case in point'.³⁴

Three main possibilities used by the better-off to escape the food restrictions are generally identified: buying unrationed goods, buying through the black market and eating in restaurants.³⁵

There is no major disagreement about the first point. Obviously, the greater was the income, the greater was the opportunity to stock-up, to pay exorbitant price for scarce commodities or to benefit from a preferential treatment by shopkeepers.³⁶ The historical opinion about the governmental measures taken (price controls and an extension of the rationing scheme called the points system) is also rather unanimous.³⁷ The existence of

³² As stated by Zweiniger-Bargielowska, while the idea of "fair share for all" was central in the wartime propaganda, "wartime food policy fell short of the ideal of equality of sacrifice" Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?", 135; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 2.

³³ With some exception such as Marwick considering that "On the whole, rationing was efficient and equitable" Marwick, *The Home Front*, 83.

³⁴ Calder, *The People's War*, 404.

³⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 77–9; Calder, *The People's War*, 405–7; Gardiner, *Wartime*, 177–8; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 150; Mackay, Robert. *Half the Battle : Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2002, 200.

³⁶ Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 2002, 199; Burnett, John. *England Eats Out : A Social History of Eating Out in England from 1830 to the Present*. 1st ed. Harlow England; New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004, 227.

³⁷ While the point system is generally considered as successful and appreciated by the population, the price control is generally considered not only ineffective, but even counter-productive as the food just

the black market is not debated either, although it is usually an anecdotal point of the history of the Home Front mainly related to the better-off able to afford it or the food producers and retailers involved in it.³⁸

Two historians have explored the topic in depth: Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, who dedicated one chapter of her study to black market in *Austerity in Britain*, and Mark Roodhouse in his monograph *Black Market Britain 1939-1955*.³⁹ These studies do not challenge each other, but are rather complementary. While Zweiniger-Bargielowska focuses on the extent, administration and perception of black market, Roodhouse also engages with food producers and the black market, urban vs. rural areas, everyday practices and the feelings expressed by black marketers. In addition, he investigates the grey market (exchanging coupons/rationed goods usually without financial profit), its differentiation with the black market (selling/buying rationed goods with financial benefit) and its omnipresence in British society.⁴⁰ Moreover, especially significant for the present study, Roodhouse makes great use of qualitative material and includes the middle-classes and their specific advantages and difficulties as well as the expression of their feeling about illegal practices.⁴¹ Concerning the opportunity to get food off-ration by eating out, the historical position on restaurant and communal feeding centres varies. Three recurrent aspects of eating out are noticeable in the secondary literature. First, reflecting a quite common binary vision of the society, numerous authors concentrate on the fact

disappeared from shop to reappear under the counter. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 71, 77; Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 2002, 141; Gardiner, *Wartime*, 172.

³⁸ Calder, *The People's War*, 254, 407–8, Mackay, Robert. *The Test of War : Inside Britain, 1939-45*. London; Philadelphia PA: UCL Press, 1999., 110–1; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 150; Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 237.

³⁹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 160–77; Roodhouse, Mark. *Black Market Britain, 1939-1955*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁴⁰ A point of importance regarding the everyday life and food practice discussed in this study. Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain, 1939-1955*, 42–3, 51, 78–9.

⁴¹ In contrast with working class customers, the middle-class ones used to buy most of their ration entitlement and spend a significant amount of money on unrationed goods. Nevertheless, their situation degraded as their purchase power decreased while the availability of their usual commodities greatly reduced. Roodhouse also discusses the evolution of practices resulting from the change of value and role of scarce food and the frustration, and sometimes a feeling of entitlement justifying the use of black market Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain, 1939-1955*, 40–3.

that the rich (also called better-off or well-off and whose richness is not defined) continued to eat well in restaurants (in contrast with the working class that could not afford to eat out) without really considering the middle and lower-middle classes.⁴² Second, it is argued that a change of habits occurred, with a significant increase in the numbers of people eating out.⁴³ Finally, it is asserted that communal feeding centres (canteens and British Restaurants) have played a major role in this change.⁴⁴

While the question of restaurants use has not been deeply re-examined, the last two assertions have been re-evaluated in more recent studies. Oddy for instance, refutes a major change in eating habits and claims that home was still the favourite place to eat.⁴⁵ Concerning the British Restaurants, the extent of their importance and impact has been revised downward. Peter Atkins in particular, demonstrates their small impact on the wartime feeding of the population (2% of meals taken in 1943) and their regional disparity.⁴⁶ Based on Social Surveys evidence, the appreciation of the meals served at the British Restaurants varies from very good to bad, with on the whole the impression that the food was of 'good quality and filling', although the opinions of the upper classes presented is very critical.⁴⁷ Still, despite what seems to be an important factor to be taken into account, none of these authors explore the potential influence of social class and

⁴² Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 2002, 200; Calder, *The People's War*, 176; Burnett, *England Eats out*, 232; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 150; Gardiner, *Wartime*, 177; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 78–9.

⁴³ Especially by Burnett who, emphasising Calder's suggestion, states that "more people ate out than ever before and, probably, never again until the most recent years" Burnett, *England Eats out*, 226; Calder, *The People's War*, 386.

⁴⁴ Calder, *The People's War*, 386; Burnett, *England Eats out*, 242; Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 2002, 151.

⁴⁵ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 158–9.

⁴⁶ Concentration in London, South East vs. North West and cities vs. countryside Atkins, Peter J. "Communal Feeding in War Time: British Restaurant, 1940-1947." In *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe*, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska; Rachel Duffett; and Alain Drouard, 139-154, London: Ashgate, 2011, 146, 151; Source of resentment in rural areas Howkins, A. "A Country at War: Mass-Observation and Rural England, 1939-45." *Rural History* 9, no. 1 (1998): 75–98, 86.

⁴⁷ 60% Very good; 21% Good (considering circumstances and price); 15% Bad. Burnett, *England Eats out*, 246; Atkins, "Communal Feeding," 149; From a conservative MP: "One has to be British to 'take it'" Gardiner, *Wartime*, 178.

personal tastes in the choice or rejection of British Restaurant.⁴⁸ The customers are generally defined as industrial, office or commercial workers, men or single (young) women, but rarely housewives.⁴⁹ Indeed, as indicated by Gardiner, British Restaurants were not of great help for families and consequently mothers who had to manage their household and provide food to the family despite the wartime difficulties and without much support.⁵⁰ The difficulties met by women (housewives or working ones) has been recognised by Calder, but emphasised by later historians such as Gardiner, Field, and especially by Zweiniger-Bargielowska who dedicates a whole chapter to women, and specifically housewives and mothers.⁵¹ Even so, gendered approaches to the war usually focus upon female employment or citizenship rather than housewifery and most studies give attention to the difficulty of shopping and the queuing, again without information about eating habits and not much about middle-class experiences except to emphasise the inequality of distribution.⁵²

Such approaches to the Home Front have led to a historical focus on the urban working class experiences and a binary perception of a British society divided between rich and poor that rarely takes into account those in the middle or those living in rural area,

⁴⁸ In reference to the present study, the demography of customers and the regional disparity can explain, at least partially, the poor use of British Restaurants by the diarists (married, living in suburb and/or middle-aged single women). Nevertheless, the reasons given to not eat in such facilities were related to the diarists' distaste for the food served compare to their middle-class eating habits and preferences, a further evidence of the distinction between class preference for food.

⁴⁹ Only 1.3% of housewives having had a meal in a British Restaurant, either because none was available or because they preferred to eat at home Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 114; Vernon, *Hunger*, 189–90.

⁵⁰ Gardiner, *Wartime*, 178.

⁵¹ It is noticeable that while main information about women and housewives are now offered, there is a lack of research on the involvement of husband, giving the impression of a strong gendered separation that demands to be investigated. Calder, *The People's War*, 389; Chapter 3 Women Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 99–128; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Housewifery," 149–64; Women as Housewives in Chapter 4 The Mobilization of Women Field, Geoffrey G. *Blood, Sweat, and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939-1945*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 131–9.

⁵² For an account of upper-class food production and management, see Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top"; Mackay, *The Test of War*, 1999, 220–1; Field, *Blood, Sweat, and Toil*, 129–183; Purcell, Jennifer. *Domestic Soldiers*. London: Constable, 2011; Purcell, Jennifer. "Beyond Home: Housewives and the Nation, Private and Public Identities 1939-1949." Sussex, 2008.; Stanley, Liz. "Women Have Servants and Men Never Eat: Issues in Reading Gender, Using the Case Study of Mass-Observation's 1937 Day-Diaries." *Women's History Review* 4, no. 1 (1995): 85–102.

reflecting a particular wartime type of wartime experience. In addition, many authors seem to share Brassley and Potter's vision of the middle-class as a homogenous group that was 'able to afford greatest variety of food in a number of ways' because of larger resources, a vision that does not take into account the diversity of this social group and the difficulties met by those in the lower sub-categories.⁵³ Indeed, apart from Nelson whose study on social class and diet trends demonstrates the degradation of the middle-class nutritional regime, discussions about middle and lower middle-classes wartime food experiences are mostly incidental in historical studies.⁵⁴ Similarly, despite its importance, the influence of pre-war habits on perceptions of the wartime diet is rarely introduced, especially for middle-class. While statistical data allow for a measuring of the general change in food intake, they do not offer much information on the degree of change or its impact on everyday food practices.⁵⁵ Therefore, it can be said that while the secondary literature provides essential information about the administration of wartime food policy, descriptions of food control systems and governmental measures, nutritional data about the wartime diet and food intake and, to some extent, about the attitude of the civilians, it has its limit regarding the everyday life and wartime habits of the population.⁵⁶

These limits are partially due to the sources employed and the use of a small number of studies in the creation of a long-standing perception of the wartime food management

⁵³ Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 226.

⁵⁴ Nelson, "Social-Class Trends in British Diet, 1860-1980"; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain, 1939-1955*; Mackay maintains that while the rationing did not change much the lives of the poorest or richest members of the society, middle-classes were hit the most Mackay, *The Test of War*, 1999, 181; Mentions the perception of loss greater for those used to delicacies in contrast with working class used to bread and spread. Driver, Christopher. *The British at Table, 1940-1980*. London: Chatto & Windus ;Hogarth Press, 1983.

⁵⁵ The increase of milk intake, potatoes, and vegetables and the decrease of meat, poultry, fish citrus, fruits, sugar, syrups, and eggs intake have been documented Calder, *The People's War*, 404.

⁵⁶ Social history Home Front Calder, *The People's War*; Field, *Blood, Sweat, and Toil*; Administration and public response Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000; For food production: Wilt, *Food for War*; Nash, "Wartime Control of Food and Agricultural Prices"; Rationing: Reddaway, W.B. "Rationing" In *Lessons of the British War Economy*, D.N. Chester ed., 182-199, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951; The study of the wartime experience of a rich American woman and her involvement in food production is an interesting, still unique, exception. Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top'.

and its positive outcomes, but also of a lack of use of qualitative material.⁵⁷ This is not to say that personal testimonies have not been employed by historians.⁵⁸ However, as asserted by James Hinton referring to the use of Mass Observation Archives material, these authors predominantly use quotations as supportive examples for their existing arguments rather than deeply and systematically analysing qualitative sources as the basis for new interpretations.⁵⁹ Certainly, historical accounts of the Home Front evolved over time, accordingly to the availability of new sources and new research. Nonetheless, the literature lacks a systematic analysis of qualitative data and of research on the wartime everyday food practices, especially concerning the middle-classes. In other words, as pointed out by Brassley and Potter, the wartime food historical account needs a better balance between the quantitative and official perspective and the effect of food regulation on the everyday life of individuals. The careful use of contemporary testimonies would then reveal a complexity and a variety of the wartime experience impossible to perceive in national archives.⁶⁰ This is what this thesis is about.

Structure of the thesis and chapters layout

This study is structured into five sections. It begins with this introduction that presents the research aim, summarises its results and discusses the main secondary sources used. Then follows the core of the thesis that comprises three chapters: 'Contextualisation', 'Primary Source Analysis' and 'Wartime Food Practices: Factors of Influence'. It ends with a short conclusion that recapitulates the research aims and results, discusses the methodology and the limitations of the study before offering potential avenues for further research.

⁵⁷ In particular Calder, *The People's War Britain, 1939-1945.*, 1969; Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 2002.

⁵⁸ See Gardiner, *Wartime*; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain, 1939-1955*; Howkins, "A Country at War"; Purcell, *Domestic Soldiers*; Wartime diaries and extract from such material have also been published Garfield, Simon. *We Are at War : The Diaries of Five Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*. London: Ebury, 2006; Sheridan, Dorothy. *Wartime Women: A Mass Observation Anthology, 1937-45*. London: Phoenix, 2009.

⁵⁹ Hinton, James, and Mass-Observation. *Nine Wartime Lives : Mass-Observation and the Making of the Modern Self*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 17; Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 224.

⁶⁰ Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 240.

The three chapters composing the core of the thesis have distinct features:

The first chapter, 'Contextualisation' sets up the historical and methodological context of the research. Its first section, 'Sources and Methodology', introduces Mass Observation, the aims and methods of the organisation as well as the material available in its archive. The replies and the diaries used in this thesis are then presented with their interest and limitations. Finally the methodology that has been specifically designed is explained in details for each source. The second section, 'Historical and Social Contextualisation' introduces the creation of specific British food habits resulting from the development of transport and preserving techniques and the subsequent intensification of the imperial and global market. It then introduces the wartime circumstances and restrictions that challenged these eating habits through the presentation of the reduction of importation and the regulation of food distribution. Finally it discusses the social group specifically targeted, namely middle-class, their history, the various criteria of social classification and the specific eating habits that influenced their wartime food experience as well as their perception of it.

The second chapter, 'Primary Source Analysis' is also divided into two parts. The first one focuses on the Directive Replies of 1943. After offering a review of additional survey and material providing data about the wartime food situation prior to 1943, it introduces the replies, presents their quantitative and qualitative analysis and their results, with a special attention to the unexpected ones, which are re-examined in relation to the factors that influenced the replies, explicitly time and social class, offering explanations for the surprising results. The second part focuses on the eight diarists and their narratives. Beginning with a brief biography of each diarist, it continues with the presentation of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of their diaries as individuals and as a group and discusses the similarities and dissimilarities found in their testimonies. Finally, an analysis of three main common experiences (food shortage, health and feeling and complaints) is

made, providing information about the everyday lives, difficulties, priorities and factors of influence present in the narratives of the diarists.

The third chapter, 'Wartime Food Practices: Factors of Influence' concentrates on four key dimensions affecting wartime food eating habits, namely scarcity, social class, familial status and time. The impact of scarcity on the value and role of food, personal relationships or the emergence of the black market, the importance of social class and familial status regarding food choices, priorities, and attitude as well as the importance of the time passing on the perception and appreciation of the food situation are discussed. In other words, the centrality of these four factors to a study of the impact of the war on food practices is demonstrated through a thematic analysis of the testimonies and the comparison of the result of this analysis to other sources and the secondary literature.

Chapter I

Contextualisation

Chapter I: Contextualisation

As explained in the introduction, this thesis is divided into three main chapters. While chapter II and chapter III discuss the research and its result, the first chapter focuses on the sources used, their origin and the method designed to analyse them, as well as the historical and social framework of this study. In other words, by introducing these various dimensions, this part offers a contextualisation of the core of this thesis.

Various reasons justify such an introductory section. Firstly, this thesis is mainly based on material gathered by Mass Observation, primarily wartime diaries and questionnaires. While wartime Social Survey and personal testimonies (letters, diaries) exists, Mass Observation can be understood as a unique kind of organisation. Its resources are distinctive from other material available, partly because of its richness and the way it was collected, partly because it is neither public nor private (for instance, in contrast with personal diaries, those written by Mass Observers were written for an audience). It is necessary to know the value as well as the limits of such sources, and it is equally essential to be familiar with the procedure that was used to analyse them in order to understand the approach taken and the results presented. Secondly, the understanding of the impact of the Second World War on the British population's food habits necessitates some understanding of these habits and their history, as well as the circumstances that disrupted them. Moreover, due to the influence of social class affiliation on food practices, a sociological perspective of the group predominantly studied, namely the middle classes, is also essential. As a result of this contextualisation, the reason d'être of the sources and their limits, as well as the effectiveness of a methodology specifically conceived to treat them, will be established. In addition, the major influence of the global and imperial trade in the development of British eating habits and the impact of its wartime disruption on everyday food practices will be demonstrated and the crucial importance of social class when studying food practices will be verified.

This first chapter of the thesis is structured into two parts, each containing two sections. In the first part, 'Sources and Methodology', I shortly introduce 'Mass Observation', its history and material, before presenting the sources I analysed. Then, I discuss my methodological choices; explicate the analytic process used to treat the material as well as the procedure of selection of the diaries examined. In the second part, 'Historical and Social Contextualisation', I firstly present the construction of the British food system prior to the war and the wartime food circumstances that disrupted it. In the second section, I discuss the British middle classes, their origin, the criteria used to determine their social affiliation and their pre-war diet. Finally, based on two contemporary surveys, I determine an ideal type of middle-class diet as compared to the wartime one.

Chapter I, Part I: Sources and Methodology

1. Mass Observation

Mass Observation, set up in 1937 by three young men, Tom Harrisson, Charles Madge, and Humphrey Jennings, aimed to collect data, analyse and to 'develop an understanding of the society from within' to quote Nick Hubble.⁶¹ In addition to recording everyday lives, the organisation had a political agenda as well, related to the creation of a democratic public sphere and a more active contribution of citizens to their society.⁶²

The methods employed were sociological and anthropological. A team of observers and volunteers (called the National Panel) was recruited through press advertisements and enrolled to provide information collected through questionnaires and observations, a

⁶¹ Pickering, Michael. "Democracy and Communication: Mass Observation 1936-1943." *Journal of Communication* 36, no. 1 (1986): 41–41 – 56; 41–56; Sheridan, Dorothy. "Writing to the Archive: Mass-Observation as Autobiography." *Sociology* 27, no. 1 (1993), 29; Hubble, Nick. *Mass-Observation and Everyday Life Culture, History, Theory*. Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 227.

⁶² Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2.

novelty in the field.⁶³ The volunteers were firstly meant to list their daily activities on given days, then to share their opinions on specific events or aspects of their lives. By 1939 they also received monthly questionnaires (called Directives) to send back completed.⁶⁴ At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the willing volunteers were asked to write and send a war diary as well.⁶⁵ Because such wartime direct testimonies were a precious source of information for the authorities, Mass Observation acquired a new role. To quote Michael Pickering, it became a 'finger on the pulse of the popular feeling'.⁶⁶ Such arrangements resulted from the friendship between Tom Harrisson and Mary Adams, in the early 1930s. Adams, then director of the Home Intelligence section of the Ministry of Information, employed Mass Observation as a source of information about the population's morale.⁶⁷ Consequently, home front morale - reactions and attitude to war events and governmental decisions - was added to the primary interests of the organisation that became an intermediary between the Government and the population (although without losing its first objectives).⁶⁸

These various interests resulted in a huge variety of data. These data provide information about a multitude of topics from shopping habits to opinion on religion but, above all, according to Dorothy Sheridan, about the responses to wartime conditions.⁶⁹ Today, the Mass Observation Archive material is one of the richest sources of information available about 1940s British society and the home front experience.⁷⁰ In addition to the raw

⁶³ Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2; Courage, "The National Panel Responds"; Calder, Angus. *Speak for Yourself : A Mass-Observation Anthology, 1937-49*. London: Cape, 1984, 5; Lander, Ben, and Stephen Brooke. "Mass Observation: A Historical Introduction." Accessed November 26, 2013. <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk>

⁶⁴ Courage, "The National Panel Responds"

⁶⁵ Calder, *Speak for Yourself*, 5; Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2.

⁶⁶ Pickering, "Democracy and Communication," 52.

⁶⁷ Hubble, *Mass-Observation and Everyday Life Culture*, 49.

⁶⁸ Lander and Brooke, "Mass Observation: A Historical Introduction"; Hinton, James. *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 369.

⁶⁹ Sheridan, Dorothy. "Reviewing Mass-Observation: The Archive and Its Researchers Thirty Years on", Forum: *Qualitative Social Research*. Vol. 1, 2000. <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/9729>.

⁷⁰ From the 1970s the material of Mass Observation was organised and categorised at the University of Sussex. Harrisson, Tom, Dorothy Sheridan, and Colin Dixon. *The Mass-Observation Archive, a Guide for Researchers*. Brighton: Tom Harrisson and Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex Library, 1987, 1.

material of investigation kept in the Topic Collections (1937-1960), the archive consists of studies and published works by the Organisation (1937-1966), the Worktown collection, related to the investigation conducted in industrial centres (1937-1940), the day surveys (1937-1938), the File Reports, approximately 3,000 communications based on the materials provided by the observers and the national panel (1938-1965), the Directive Replies, a monthly questionnaire about various themes sent to the volunteers (1939-1955) and the Diaries, recounting the wartime experiences of circa 500 volunteers (1939-1963).⁷¹

As shown by the list of material available, the massive quantity of data collected by the organisation was analysed and used to produce reports and publications.

Figure 1: The Material and the Process of Its Use by Mass Observation



Source: http://www.massobs.org.uk/original_collections.htm

As can be seen on the table above, the relationship between the various sources is visible in the connectivity between the various materials, their analysis and their presentation. The same connectivity is present in this thesis. While the core of the research is based on

⁷¹ Lander, Ben. "Using Mass Observation as a Graduate Student." Accessed July 27, 2012. <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk>, 4–8.

the analysis of eight diaries and the replies to a Directive tackling wartime eating habits, additional data found in Files Reports and the Topic Collections were also used.⁷² All together these various resources are complementary, allowing different perspectives on the wartime food situation. For instance, the diaries and replies are both primary sources, but of different natures. While the diaries are wartime autobiographies ‘in which the potential range of subject that can be covered in a single day is infinite’, the Directives are very specific in their topics, whether it is about the reaction to an event, the description of a habit or the recounting of a wartime experience.⁷³ The File Reports on the other hand, are representative of the concerns of the Government, the interest of the organisation and the issues and worries at the time. Besides, they also permit access to the results of the investigations, providing quantitative and qualitative data.⁷⁴

While it was important to consider the nature of the different Mass Observation resources used in my research, the evolution of the interest of the organisation had to be considered as well. Regarding food, the organisation moved from its primary sociological and anthropological curiosity to a focus on wartime popular opinion. Then it concentrated on purchasing habits in the late 1940s.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, such evolution prevents a long-term comparative study. It would have been useful to get similar surveys about eating

⁷² TC 67 Food. For a description of the material available on food in the Topic Collection, see: Chevalier, Natacha. “The Magical Treasure Chest and the Endless Treasure Hunt: Mass Observation Topic Collections and Its Primary Sources on Food.” Adam Matthew Digital, n.d. Mass Observation Online. <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/FurtherResources/Essays/MassObservationTopicCollectionsAndItsPrimarySourcesOnFood>.

⁷³ Courage, “The National Panel”; Sheridan, “Writing to the Archive,” 30.

⁷⁴ The addition of material other than the Mass Observation one was considered. Data from the National Archives have been used, although newspapers or wartime diaries from the Imperial War Museum were not. The reason for this decision was based on the significance of the contribution of such material to the thesis. While the source for the National Archives offered essential information, articles, despite being of interest, did not and wartime diaries were already the main primary source of data analysed. Besides, Mass Observation, in addition to be a central dimension of this thesis, was already providing additional material to be combined with the replies and the diaries.

⁷⁵ It is not to say that the organisation was spying on the civilians or supported the governmental propaganda. It could be seen as a way to influence the decision-making with information about the population’s real experiences and feelings, instead of prejudices linked with the social class of the leaders. The organisation argued in the introduction of their Mass Observation Weekly Intelligence Service (published between February and May 1940) that their aim was to present the unheard voice of the people MOA Weekly Intelligence Service, 13 February 1940; MOA Weekly Intelligence Service, 12 April 1940; Hinton, *The Mass Observers*, 369; Sheridan, *Reviewing Mass-Observation*.

habits before and during the war, or even another Directive to compare with the one analysed.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the richest of the archives offer multiple resources to explore. For instance, useful data was found for the period preceding the war (such as shopping habits or opinion of margarine) and for the wartime period (reports on food tensions, food and rationing, shortages, shopping, communal feeding or specific products).⁷⁷ Added to this, surveys about war inconveniences or health provided additional information about the consequences of the wartime food restrictions.⁷⁸

In other words, the choice of Mass Observation Archive as a main resource for this study is easily justified: it offers an intimate insight into the period of time studied and the sources come mainly from the social group targeted. The variety of data available also allows a good contextualisation of the food situation and useful information about the perceptions of those affected by it. However, using such material necessitates some precautions.

Mass Observation Material: Strength, Weakness and Precautions

Although the various sources offered by Mass Observation are invaluable for social scientists, their utilisation can be problematic. For instance the lack of representativeness due to an over-representation of the middle classes in the National Panel can limit its use.⁷⁹ Fortunately, in the case of this research, this issue became an advantage, as I focused on middle class food practices.⁸⁰ With regard to the sources examined, specific concerns have to be considered as well. Firstly, concerning the Directive Replies, the

⁷⁶ It could be imagined that the subject was addressed in some of the missing material of 1941 or presumed that the information gathered from the diaries and the surveys were considered as sufficient, thus the directive used to study other topics, but no evidence permit to understand such lack of survey.

⁷⁷ MOA FR 632 Food Tensions February 1941; MOA FR 1155 Food Tensions March 1942; MOA FR 1594 Food in Conversations February 1943; MOA FR 704 Food and Rationing; MOA FR 999 American Tinned Food.

⁷⁸ MOA FR 1629 Health, March 1943; MOA FR 574 War in December Diaries 1940.

⁷⁹ Courage, "The National Panel" quoting Stanley Nick, 1981. The extra dimension: a study and assessment of the method employed by Mass-Observation in its first period, 1937-1940. Non-published PhD; Savage, "Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain," 459–465.

⁸⁰ Although the diarists were predominantly from urban or suburban areas, thus the experiences related by the diarists differ from those of people living in rural areas.

accuracy of recall can be an issue.⁸¹ While the experiences related in the diaries were written on a short-term basis, a Directive tackling the changes in diet after three and a half years of war demanded an effort of memory, a point of importance to take into account during their analysis. Likewise, the context of the replies can be problematic. The personal situation of the respondents is inextricably linked with their writing and such information was scarce, limiting the contextualisation of the replies. As for the diaries, they present other difficulties, related mainly to their length and their individuality. The organisation itself considered them as ‘essentially supplementary to more detailed investigations’ and to be used to illustrate and not demonstrate the problem discussed. The ‘nature of the material’, the individuality of the testimonies and the particularity of each writer prevented any general publication about the war, despite the fact that such a report would have been ‘of great interest’, according to the observers.⁸² Concerning the present work, the use of the data was supported by additional materials, among others the contemporary studies on food and secondary literature. In addition, to paraphrase James Hinton, this study is not about everyone’s experience of the kitchen front, but limited to a group of people, chosen for the relevance of the information they offered to this research.

Nevertheless, working with these sources demands consideration on the research aim and the data. According to Niamh Moore, Mass Observation Archives is ‘one of the largest collections of qualitative data in UK’.⁸³ The size of the archive and its qualitative characteristic makes the archive precious, but its treatment challenging.⁸⁴ Therefore, the material has been considered as ‘unmanageable’, ‘impenetrable’ and ‘too complex and varied to construct anything other than a superficial chronological narrative of the six years of conflict’.⁸⁵ Although all these qualifying terms are appropriate, they also relate to

⁸¹ Sheridan, “Writing to the Archive,” 29.

⁸² MOA FR 2181 (Letters from CB and note from BW); Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 17.

⁸³ Moore, Niamh. “(Re)Using Qualitative Data?” *Sociological Research Online* 12, no. 3 (2007).

⁸⁴ Savage, Mike. “Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain: Perspectives from Mass-Observation.” *Sociological Research Online* 12, no. 3 (2007).

⁸⁵ Highmore, Ben. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. London; New York: Routledge, 2002,

a certain kind of research purpose, perhaps not suitable to such sources. My perspective adheres to a new attitude that considers the research according to the capacity of the data to provide answers, rather than trying to get a broad and general picture from individual and personal information.⁸⁶ This approach, more specific in its subject and its demands, takes advantage of the richness of the sources through their individuality, but without losing the opportunity to combine and cross analyse the data in order to get either a general idea or a specific perspective.⁸⁷ Besides, the individuality of the diaries does not mean uniqueness. A single diary can represent a multitude of similar experiences countrywide.⁸⁸ This is especially relevant for a study related to the wartime food situation. Many people faced the same shortages and despite the fact that its management could differ in relation to financial means, rationing touched everyone in one way or another. In consequence, the issue is not the value of the data, but the reflection made on its utilisation. More focused research decreases the weakness of these sources, while increasing their potentialities, especially when the data is treated with a methodology specifically adapted to its particularities.

2. Methodology

This section aims to explain my methodology in order to facilitate the comprehension of my analytic process and its results. I considered two methods to analyse my sources, the quantitative approach and qualitative approach.⁸⁹ The quantitative analysis would have provided precise, numerical and countable data allowing the measurement and comparison of results. However, figures alone would be ineffective or even susceptible to misinterpretation without their contextualisation. The qualitative analysis, on the other

85; Quoting Kertesz (1993) Sheridan, Dorothy, Brian V. Street, and David Bloome. *Writing Ourselves : Mass-Observation and Literacy Practices*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 2000, 36; Quoting Calder (1969) Kushner, Tony. *We Europeans? : Mass-Observation, "Race" and British Identity in the Twentieth Century*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004, 161.

⁸⁶ Quoting Kertesz (1993) Kushner, Tony. *We Europeans?*, 161.

⁸⁷ Gender for instance.

⁸⁸ Kushner, *We Europeans?*, 163.

⁸⁹ Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14, no. 3 (2006): 227–249.

hand, would have provided this contextualisation but not determine the amplitude of the changes studied. In consequence, a method mixing both approaches was the most pragmatic option, ‘the best opportunity for answering the research question’ to quote Johnson, provided that its design was adapted to the source.⁹⁰

The Data and their Treatment: Directive Replies of April 1943

The first data analysed were the replies to the question B5 of the Directive sent to 322 respondents (162 men, 160 women) in April 1943. The Directive had three questions priority A (for everyone) about political truce, clothes and aviation, and three questions priority B (for everyone who can possibly spare the time) about holidays, homes and the following one about eating habits and tastes:

What do you consider the main changes the war has brought about in your eating habits, and to what extent, if at all, do you think your tastes have changed. In answering this question, please deal with changes (if any) in the place you eat, the speed at you eat etc. etc. as well as with changes in the sort of food you eat.⁹¹

248 respondents answered that question, sometimes by a single sentence, sometimes over numerous pages (see example of Directive Replies appendix 12a). In order to extract and classify the information contained in the replies, a qualitative content analysis method, including defining the key points to be collected and the grouping of these points into categories, was used. This method, a ‘bundle of techniques for systematic text analyses’ as described by Mayring, is widely used in communication, journalism, sociology and psychology.⁹² Its flexibility and systematic approach to the data made it the relevant choice for the treatment of the MO material, subject to some adaptation. The content analysis process comprises the examination of the replies, the extraction of the relevant

⁹⁰ Johnson, R. Burke, and Anthony J Onwuegbuzie. “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.” *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 7 (2004), 16, 19–20.

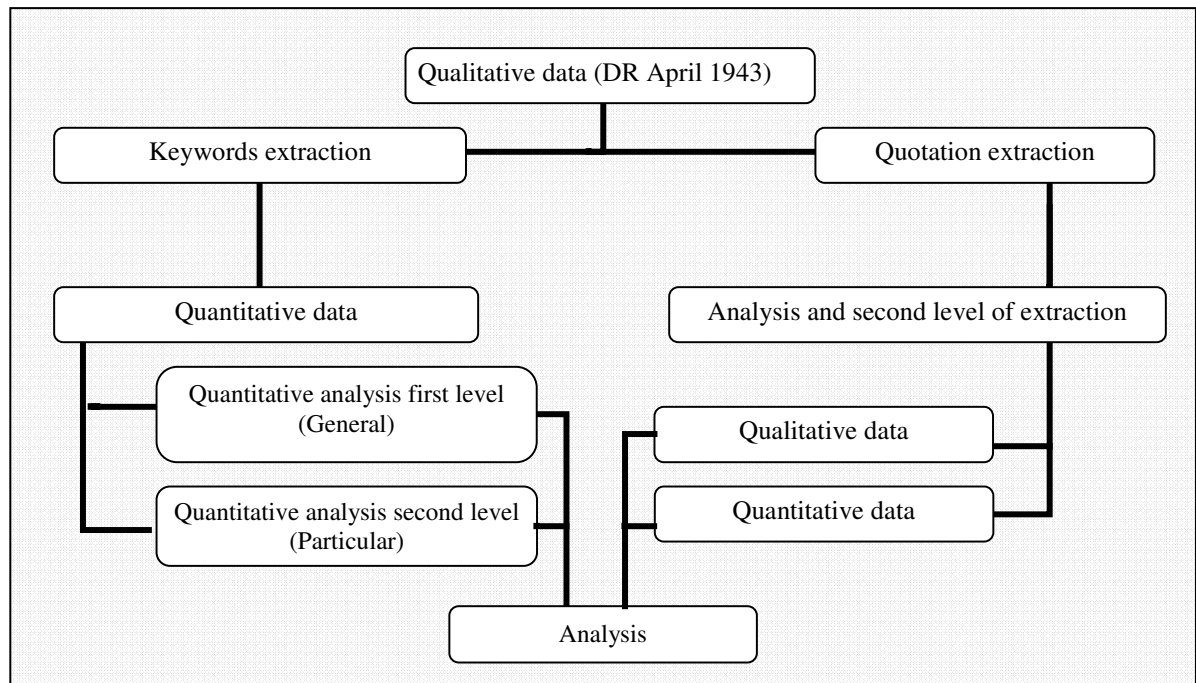
⁹¹ MOA Directive Replies April 1943, Priority B, Question 5.

⁹² Mayring, Philipp. “Qualitative Content Analysis.” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), Art. 20, 2000; Elo, Satu, and Helvi Kyngäs. “The Qualitative Content Analysis Process.” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 62, no. 1 (2007), 108, 110.

information and the categorisation of the data according to a list of headings.⁹³ Similarly, personal information was also recorded in order to have demographic information to compare to the food information.

Two kinds of data were extracted: keywords, providing quantitative data for comparison, tables and statistical analysis, and quotations or paraphrases that preserved the qualitative characteristics of the sources and consequently allowed the qualitative treatment of the information. The whole process can be graphically represented as follow:

Figure 2: Method design for Directive Replies April 1943 Data



This method facilitated the identification of themes and patterns, thus the categorisation of the information extracted.⁹⁴

⁹³ Changes in diet, eat less of, eat more of, new foods, changes in taste, missed foods, place of eating before the war and in 1943, food before the war and in 1943, personal remarks

Categories are central in such an analytic procedure. Two different approaches to their construction can be employed, namely inductive and deductive content analysis.⁹⁵ The two methods are radically different. The deductive approach, used mainly to test existing theories, is based on a structured analysis matrix. The data is coded according to categories developed before its collection.⁹⁶ Conversely, the inductive approach is used to examine a phenomenon not previously studied and/or to attempt to originate a theory. In this approach, the categories are said to emerge from the examination of the data.⁹⁷ Both approaches can nonetheless be mixed in order to improve the quality of the data analysis.⁹⁸

Concerning the analysis of the Directive replies, a combination of the deductive and inductive approaches was the pragmatic solution. As a result, a primary analysis matrix (keys of understanding) was developed in order to define the kind of information to prioritise. The replies were examined and the content related to food annotated. Based on this examination, some categories were added, others withdrew or refined according to the information gathered.⁹⁹ Finally, a spreadsheet table with these categories as heading was made. At that point, a second reading of the replies was done, the data extracted and distributed into their categories (see appendix 1).

In order to do this, part of the information was treated through a procedure of abstraction; a process of standardisation meant to formulate general categories.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Wildemuth, Barbara M, and Yan Zhang. "Qualitative Analysis of Content." In *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, B. Wildemuth ed., Westport (Conn.): Libraries Unlimited, 2009, 2.

⁹⁵ Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis."

⁹⁶ Elo and Kyngäs, "The Qualitative Content Analysis Process," 110–11.

⁹⁷ Wildemuth and Zhang, "Qualitative Analysis of Content," 2.

⁹⁸ Elo and Kyngäs, "The Qualitative Content Analysis Process," 113.

⁹⁹ For instance, the heading "black market" was removed as no mentions were made on the subject.

¹⁰⁰ Elo and Kyngäs, "The Qualitative Content Analysis Process," 111.

Figure 3: Standardisation of vocabulary

Sub-categories	Generic category
Apple, orange, banana	Fruits
Roast beef, lamb chops	Meat
Cream cake	Cake
Fruit cake	Cake

Both generic and sub-category terms were recorded so as to get the general as well as the specific information (for example, eating less fruit/oranges).

The reduction to keywords was only made when possible without alteration of their signification. Hence, a large part of the data extracted was kept in the form of quotations or rephrased sentences. These quotations are the essence of the qualitative analysis as they illuminate the feelings and perspectives expressed by the respondents. Nevertheless, when possible, these sentences were also standardised. A good illustration would be the remarks made about having become less difficult about food that were expressed in various ways (less faddy, fussy or picky, for example). In order to standardise such similar feeling, the remarks were rephrased “less faddy about food”, offering a new countable data.

The same process was used regarding the changes noticed in diet as can be seen on the table below:

Figure 4: Treatment of similar meanings

Quotation	Generic category
Little change in my diet	Little
Not much change in my diet	Little
No change in my diet	None
No difference in what I eat	None
Very little changes	Very little
Only very few changes	Very little

The next step was to categorise these keywords, a challenging task as the categorisation had to respect the meanings of the respondents. Fortunately, clear indications such as ‘I miss fruit’ were usually present in the replies. Other replies, such as the comment: ‘the lack of fruit is very noticeable’, for example, had to be contextualised.¹⁰¹ In this case, the comment was part of a paragraph about the decreased consumption of the respondent. Thus it was entered into the heading “eat less of”. Occasionally, the categorisation could be more complex. For instance, the expression: ‘At the present I eat food like porridge, sausages, bacon, and eggs substitute which I wouldn’t under normal circumstance’, demanded reflection.¹⁰² While dried eggs were a new food and consequently categorised as such, it seemed unlikely that porridge or sausages could be a novelty. Under that consideration, they could be categorised under “eat more of” heading. Nevertheless, I decided to categorise them as “new food” because, according to the respondent, their consumption was specifically related to the wartime circumstances.

Another challenge was to define if the information could be assigned to several headings. Food mentioned as “missed”, for example, could also be considered as “less eaten”.¹⁰³ In quantitative content analysis, categories demand to be mutually exclusive in order to avoid statistical distortions. However, the assignation of text to a single category can be difficult and, as argued by Zhang; qualitative content analysis admits simultaneity of assignation.¹⁰⁴ Even so, I avoided multiple assignations unless a multiple meaning was significantly perceptible. For instance, the comments ‘less sugar’, ‘hate tea without sugar’ and the desire to ‘get back to more sugar’ clearly express an unwelcome decrease in the consumption of sugar, deeply missed by the respondent.¹⁰⁵ In consequence, “sugar” was categorised as “less eat” and “missed food”, according to the meaning of the reply.

¹⁰¹ MOA DR 2741.

¹⁰² MOA DR 2575.

¹⁰³ With caution as some respondents mentioned the fact to miss chocolate or sweets despite the fact that they were not used to eat them before.

¹⁰⁴ Wildemuth and Zhang, “Qualitative Analysis of Content,” 4.

¹⁰⁵ MOA DR 3302.

Following the standardisation of vocabulary and expression, the treatment of the results was organised on a step-by-step basis. Firstly, the results of the content analysis were recorded on the tables, then the keywords were analysed by category in order to define their degree of importance. Secondly, a general analysis was done; comparing the results to the 248 replies, then a particular analysis was done, comparing the results by heading (variable number of replies). Some of the categories were also compared with the demographic data in order to determine the correlation between food, gender, marital status or social class. Regarding the qualitative data collected, the information was treated individually and, when relevant, grouped according to a common meaning and quantitatively analysed as well.

This particular methodology permitted the creation of new and countable data to contextualise it. However, it has been designed for the replies to a precise question at a given time. In contrast, the diaries, written on a long period of time, are a kind of biographical recounting of the war. Therefore, the method had to be adapted to the long narrative format and massive quantities of data, although the approach was similar.

The Data and their Treatment: The diaries

Undoubtedly, the two sources analysed differ in many ways. Firstly, the quantity of material and the scope of their topics vary greatly. While the respondents had to answer punctual specific questions, the diaries recount the whole wartime experience of their writers, sometimes on a daily basis, and for years. Secondly, the reason for their use differs. The replies concern the changes in eating habits at a given time, offering a specific point of comparison with the pre-war eating habits. In contrast, the diaries offer information about the evolution of the wartime food situation on a long-term basis. In addition, they contain an infinite number of themes and details regarding the war, but also personal issues, work, family, politics or daily life, as well as the expression of emotions and opinions. Therefore, a methodology designed to manage this massive

amount of data in the most efficient manner had to be created. However, the first step was to select the diaries to be examined.

The process of selection of diaries is generally not described by the authors using them. James Hinton, for instance, explains that he chose his diarists ‘because each of them combined an unusual degree of participation in the public sphere’, but does not explain how he determined this participation.¹⁰⁶ In her thesis about wartime housewives, Jennifer Purcell presents her diarists, without mentioning how she selected them, except for the fact that she focused on middle-aged married housewives.¹⁰⁷ Such omission is regrettable as the description of the selection process would help researchers to apprehend the material of Mass Observation Archive. For these reasons, I decided to include a detailed description of the procedure of selection I used.

Selection of the diaries

The diaries analysed in this study have been chosen on a totally anonymous basis. The gender, age, occupation, background and geographical factors were unknown. This “veil of ignorance” was deliberate. I wanted to avoid any kind of conscious or unconscious bias. The selection was consequently based on a list of key words related to food.¹⁰⁸ This list was processed through the search engine of the Mass Observation digitalised website, with a result of two hundreds diaries containing at least one of the keywords.¹⁰⁹ These two hundred diaries were compared by number of matches using a spreadsheet table, and a first selection of twenty-nine diaries containing a minimum of six keywords was made (see Appendix 2 and 3). A second selection was done by reading a few pages each trimester of every diary.¹¹⁰ This reading allowed an estimation of the importance and interest of the food mentions for each season of each year. This was an important stage of the selection as some diarists with a high number of matching keywords could actually

¹⁰⁶ Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Purcell, “Beyond Home” Introduction.

¹⁰⁸ Food, meals, diet, bread, potatoes, fruits, vegetables, meat, milk, sugar, chocolate, cakes, restaurant, and black market

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/index.aspx>

¹¹⁰ Illegible handwriting prevented the reading of one diary.

only mention food incidentally while others, with less keywords, could write extensively about the food situation, shopping, diet or nutrition. As a result, based on the potential level of information offered by the diarists, the number of diaries was narrowed to fifteen.¹¹¹ At that point, a more extensive reading of these fifteen diaries (the entire year 1940 and a few months in 1942 and 1944) was done.¹¹² Eventually eight diaries were chosen accordingly to the degree of information they provided (see examples of diaries appendix 12b).¹¹³

This process of selection resulted in a great diversity of age, social class, place of living and occupation, although showing a significant gender difference: seven women and one man. Concerning duration, five diaries were written during the whole war and three for a shorter period. Nevertheless, the interest of their mentions about food practices and habits, and the particular perspective or attitude of their writers made them a pertinent source despite their reduced length. It can be said that, in the same way James Hinton selected his diarists because their testimonies enabled him 'to explore' their citizenship, I selected mine because of the significance of the information they could provide about food, its purchase, its preparation, its consumption, but also its perception and the level of details written.¹¹⁴ Such deliberate choice is a form of bias as it amplifies the importance given to the topic studied and can potentially produce a distorted image of the reality (not every diarist was involved in the public sphere or interested in food). However, in contrast with Hinton, this research is not biographical but intends to observe food in wartime on a

¹¹¹ The readability of the diary could be a criterion of rejection. The handwriting of at least three diaries was so bad that these source could even not been evaluated.

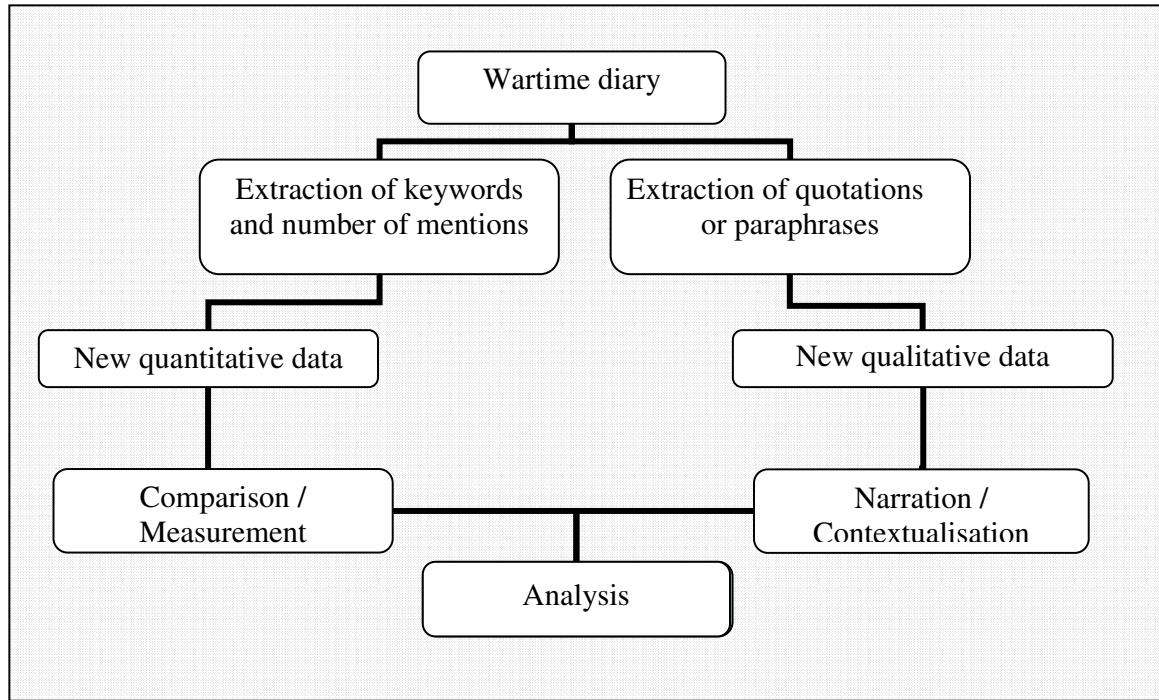
¹¹² This variation of significance can be seen on the list of selected diaries: while three diarists present ten keywords, three others show only seven. The comparison between the various keywords is also of interest as it reveals the significance of some commodities over others. However, the criteria of selection of keyword by those who created the digitalised data base are unknown. In consequence the degree of importance of these keywords for the search engine could be incidental, thus the need for a more systematic evaluation of relevance.

¹¹³ Eight diaries can be seen as a small number of testimonies to study such a vast topic. However, each one of these diaries represents between forty to eighty pages per months on average. While these testimonies provides an abundance of information, the examination and analysis of such a massive amount of data is time consuming, especially when the diary is handwritten. In consequence, only a limited number of diaries can be examined in a given time.

¹¹⁴ Hinton and Mass-Observation, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 17.

broader perspective and therefore uses various sources. In addition, the methodological approach of the diaries differs from Hinton's approach, with the inclusion of a quantitative analysis of these sources.

Similarly to the treatment of the replies, the process of analysis designed for the diaries used a mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology, and a combination of a deductive and inductive content analysis. Therefore, despite the great difference present between the sources, the visual representation of the methodology designed for their analysis is also quite alike:

Figure 5: Design of the methodological treatment of the diaries

Again, the information was extracted and categorised in a table according to various categories that evolved in time according to the information emerging from the reading. Some categories received keywords, others quotations or paraphrases. The keywords became the basis of the quantitative data, while quotes and paraphrases became the key element of the qualitative analysis. Sometimes the categories themselves became a source of new quantitative data by counting the number of remarks they contained about a specific topic. When relevant, the three kinds of information were combined. A good illustration of such a combination is the complaints formulated by the diarists. The number of complaints expressed by months was counted, offering the opportunity to observe their evolution over time. The number of complaints was also compared to the number of food mentions, allowing measuring of the degree of inconvenience related to food and, again, the evolution over time. As for the qualitative analysis of the complaints, it helped to identify the kind of issues faced by the diarists and their progression.

In contrast with the replies, however, the number of pages written monthly, and the main food non-related topics have been recorded. These two elements made possible the determination of the degree of importance of food, as well as the other priorities of the diarists and their progression in time. Admittedly, counting the pages demanded a standardised format. This requirement prevented grouping all diaries, due to the impossibility to standardise them all together. Fortunately, regarding the diaries individually, many of the diarists wrote using the same paper format for the whole war. Those with differences, such as a mix of handwriting and typing or various shapes of paper, were standardised by determining the difference and calculating the number of words per page depending on the writing and the page size. For example, one diarist used another format of page from August 1943. As the size of her paper doubled, the number of pages recorded was simply doubled as well. Then additional controls were done by counting the lines written on each kind of page format to verify that the standardisation was accurate.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

This first chapter has introduced the Mass Observation material utilised in this thesis and the methodology used to treat it. The richness and the limits of these sources have been presented, in particular the need for a narrowed and specific problematic limited to the material scope and its potential to provide answers. The benefit of a methodology mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches has been demonstrated as well. In order to do so, the whole process of data extraction, categorisation and analysis has been explained for the two main primary sources examined, namely Directive replies and wartime diaries.

The next chapter introduces other major elements of comprehension concerning this research and its results. It also presents the historical and social context that shaped the eating habits of the diarists and respondents whose testimonies have been analysed, and the wartime circumstances that challenged them.

¹¹⁵ MOA D 5240

Chapter I, Part II: Historical and Social Contextualisation

As previously argued, the comprehension of the impact of the war on food practices and the perception of such impact necessitates knowing the various dimensions that created and modified such habits and perspectives. Regarding this research, various elements have to be taken into account, namely the historical development of British eating habits, the wartime food situation and the influence of social class on diet, eating habits, tastes and attitudes.

The following section presents the historical aspect of the British food habits, then the wartime restrictions that affected them, while the next one discusses the creation and specificities of the British middle classes and their diet. In addition, it introduces an analysis of the middle class pre-war eating habits, including examples of food consumption compared to the wartime ration and the testimonies of the diarists.

1. British Eating Habits and Wartime Food Situation

An understanding of changes in eating habits demands an acknowledgement of contextual circumstances, says Sydney Mintz, because tastes and diet are shaped by various factors.¹¹⁶ These circumstances relate to the personal situation of the individuals, but also to social, cultural, regional and national, as well as historical, dimensions. For instance, those whose income permits them to go beyond primary needs normally chose their ingredients according to their preferences. However, because food is intimately linked with cultural and social representations, these preferences reflect the food practices of their societal environment.¹¹⁷ Additionally, food habits are related to the local conditions as well as food availability and costs.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the history of a country

¹¹⁶ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, xxx.

¹¹⁷ Fischler, "Food Habits"; Scholliers, *Food, Drink and Identity*, 7–9; Wright, L. T., Nancarrow, C. and Kwok, P. "Food Taste Preferences and Cultural Influences on Consumption." *British Food Journal*, 103 (5), Pp. 348–357., 2001, 348; For an extensive historiography, see Murcott, pp. 1–33 Murcott, Belasco, and Jackson, *The Handbook of Food Research*.

¹¹⁸ Wright, L. T., Nancarrow, C. and Kwok, P., "Food Taste Preferences," 350; Rozin, Paul. "The Socio-Cultural Context of Eating and Food Choice." In *Food Choice, Acceptance and Consumption*, H.L. Meiselman and

affects greatly the food practices of its inhabitants. Regarding Britain, the possession of colonies, for example, played a central role in the national culinary tradition.¹¹⁹

The Historical and Cultural Factors of British Eating Habits

The construction of specifically British food practices and tastes has been a long-term process which could be dated from the Columbian exchange (late 15th century) and the inclusion of commodities such as potatoes into the British diet.¹²⁰ However, many British eating habits familiar in the 1940s were shaped during the Victorian period.¹²¹ The development of a global trade network since the mid-19th century and the massive importation resulting from its extension had a crucial influence on British food habits.¹²²

The consumption of sugar, coffee, tea and cocoa expanded during the 18th and 19th centuries as their prices decreased.¹²³ The use of ice, then refrigeration, added to the improvement of transportation and have revolutionised the preservation and retail of fresh food.¹²⁴ By 1914, the wheat and meat consumed in Britain were mainly imported

H.J.H. MacFie eds., London: Chapman and Hall, 1996, 90.

¹¹⁹ Nützenadel, Alexander, and Frank Trentmann. "Introduction, Mapping Food and Globalization." In *Food and Globalization: Consumption, Markets and Politics in the Modern World*, Alexander Nützenadel and Frank Trentmann eds., 1-20, Oxford; New York: Berg, 2008, 2-7.

¹²⁰ The term refers to the exchange of plants, commodities, animals, germs and so on between the New World and the Old one after 1492. See Nunn, Nathan Qian, Nancy. "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (2010), 163; Fernández-Armesto, Felipe, and Benjamin Sacks. "The Global Exchange of Food and Drugs." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Frank Trentmann ed., Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 128.

¹²¹ Rappaport, Erika. "Packaging China: Foreign Articles and Dangerous Tastes in the Mid-Victorian Tea Party" In *The Making of the Consumer Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World*, Frank Trentmann ed., Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006, 125.

¹²² Nützenadel and Trentmann, "Introduction, Mapping Food," 4; Bryant, Adrienne, Leigh Bush, and Richard Wilk. "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply." In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 74.

¹²³ de Groot, Joanna. "Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire." In *At Home With the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Hall Catherine and Sonya O. Rose eds., Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 170-1.

¹²⁴ Bryant, Bush, and Wilk, "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply," 41-3; Warde, Alan. "Eating." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Frank Trentmann ed., Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 381.

from overseas. In the interwar period, beef from Argentina, lamb and butter from New Zealand, or bacon, butter and eggs from Denmark were commonly found in Britain.¹²⁵

The influence of global and imperial commerce on British practices can be demonstrated through the study of specific commodities. Sugar, for instance, illustrates the intimate relation between the availability and the development of tastes and habits as it changed from a luxury into a necessity in less than a century.¹²⁶ In the 1930s about half a kilo per week was purchased per home, without a significant difference between classes.¹²⁷ In addition to sweetened beverages, sugar was consumed in confectionnaries, cakes, biscuits, jam, syrup and custard.¹²⁸ Indeed, its general consumption went from 29 kilos (per person, per year) in 1880 to 43.5 kilos in 1934-38.¹²⁹ Sweet puddings became a middle-class course at midday and for dinner, pastry replaced bread at tea-time, and biscuits served with tea became a mark of hospitality.¹³⁰ Sugar was also a major ingredient in the mass production of fruit preserves such as cheap jam and conserves that became a part of the usual diet of the poorest sections of society, as it could substitute prepared meals while providing an important intake of calories.¹³¹

From global market to total war

Like sugar, many other imported products were made available to the British market, resulting from the need to feed an increasing population, and the possibilities offered by technological progress in transportation and preservation.¹³² Owing to steam power, primary commodities were shipped or transported by rail, while canning and refrigeration allowed their conservation and distribution. Preserving food was not a novelty; transportable food emerged in the 17th century, developed into the production of bottled

¹²⁵ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 286–7.

¹²⁶ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, xxix.

¹²⁷ Fine, *The World of Consumption*, 99–100.

¹²⁸ Fine, *The World of Consumption*, 99–101.

¹²⁹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 6.

¹³⁰ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 118–9; 133; 143.

¹³¹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 130.

¹³² Mennell, Stephen. *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Oxford; New York: B. Blackwell, 1985, 227.

then tinned commodities. Even if hazardous at first, the process improved and canned foods were made available to the population from the second half of the 19th century.¹³³ The use of cold revolutionised the preservation and retail of fresh food. Natural ice has been used to store fresh food for a long time, but the development of techniques of artificial refrigeration permitted the storage and transportation of foreign meat, fish, vegetables and fruit, making all these commodities available and affordable at the end of the 19th century.¹³⁴

Rich and poor benefited from the expansion of the global market from the 'new super rich bourgeois' purchasing exotic luxury goods, to the middle and working classes gaining access to commodities until then reserved for the privileged.¹³⁵ As the British Empire became more cosmopolitan, new tastes and habits such as drinking Chinese tea, using Indian curry powder and eating African chocolate emerged and developed.¹³⁶ These imported products were processed and packaged in industrial centres of the metropolis and sold under British or European brands.¹³⁷ The appropriation of the origin of these ingredients resulted in a national identification. Exotic commodities became a part of the British food culture, representing both the country and the Empire, and creating a complex emotional relationship with customers.¹³⁸

The importance of this global and imperial market on food practices and national identity is particularly visible in times of crisis, as illustrated by the propaganda developed in the

¹³³ Rachel Laudan recounts how only 197 of the 2,707 cans purchased by the Royal Navy in 1852 were fit to eat. Laudan, Rachel. *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2013, 295–6.

¹³⁴ Bryant, Bush, and Wilk, "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply," 41–43; Warde, "Eating," 381; Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, 296; Fernández-Armesto and Sacks, "The Global Exchange of Food and Drugs," 142.

¹³⁵ Berg, Maxine. "Luxury, The Luxury Trades, and the Roots of Industrial Growth: A Global Perspective." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, 174–91. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 178, 183–4.

¹³⁶ Bryant, Bush, and Wilk, "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply" 40–1.

¹³⁷ Bryant, Bush, and Wilk, "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply" 40–1; Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. "Food, Culture and Energy." In *Food and Globalization: Consumption, Markets and Politics in the Modern World*, Alexander Nützenadel and Frank Trentmann eds., 21–36, Oxford; New York: Berg, 2008, 97.

¹³⁸ Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. "Food, Culture and Energy", 97–100.

interwar period. The post-war de-globalisation and the financial difficulties faced by the country incited a new protectionism and the promotion of products from the Empire and the Commonwealth.¹³⁹ Private and governmental organisations such as the British Women's Patriotic League or the Empire Marketing Board (EMB, established in 1926) promoted imperial commodities through campaigns, exhibitions, posters and advertisements.¹⁴⁰ The 'Empire Christmas pudding' is an eloquent example of such campaign. Entirely composed of products from the Empire or the Commonwealth, the pudding, especially created for the royal family, was given a lot of publicity by the EMB. The recipe was distributed widely in the country and the Empire, for the people to share a moment of national and imperial communion.¹⁴¹

A campaign based on a single and seasonal dish seems anecdotal. Nevertheless, the product itself and the propaganda made about it are representative of the concepts mentioned above concerning the role of food as a national marker. However, the financial dimension of these campaigns should not be forgotten. The imperial marketing propaganda was a response to a financial crisis. But its benefits were also of interest for the retailers selling the ingredients as well as ready-made puddings.¹⁴² Indeed, the Christmas pudding had become a processed convenient commodity, as had many others, as the development of the food industry led to mass production of standardised products and the creation of new and cheap commodities such as condensed milk or margarine.¹⁴³ In parallel, the introduction of chain stores in the 1860s changed retailing and shopping practices. By 1900 multiple stores had opened, first in big cities then in many suburbs and towns, and their progression pursued in the 20th century. This new retail system went on

¹³⁹ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 287; Nützenadel and Trentmann, "Introduction, Mapping Food and Globalization," 11.

¹⁴⁰ O'Connor K. "The King's Christmas Pudding: Globalization, Recipes, and the Commodities of Empire." *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 1 (2009), 139–40; Kothari, Uma. "Trade, Consumption and Development Alliances: The Historical Legacy of the Empire Marketing Board Poster Campaign." *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (2014), 44–7; 54.

¹⁴¹ See O'Connor K, "The King's Christmas Pudding."

¹⁴² Connolly, Mark. *Christmas: A History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012, 126.

¹⁴³ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 289–291; Bryant, Bush, and Wilk, "The History of Globalization and the Food Supply," 41–43.

with the increase of variety and choice, processed and pre-packaged products and the growth of advertisements.¹⁴⁴ The cookbooks, domestic manuals, and women's magazines that entered British households were another influence on the eating habits of the population, especially the middle classes.¹⁴⁵

The expansion of the middle classes in this period importantly influenced food practices. 'The years between 1880 and 1914 marked the greatest turning point in culinary history since the mastery of grains', claims Rachel Laudan, referring to the development of what she called 'the middling cuisine'. This is a cuisine that abounded with carbohydrates, animal proteins, and fat, until then consumed by the wealthy.¹⁴⁶ Her statement is supported by John Burnett in *Plenty and Want*. Standards of living rose among the middle classes whose income allowed some latitude and choice in food purchases. New attitudes and richer dietary patterns developed as a simpler version of the aristocratic eating habits was adopted. The menus given by Burnett for 1901 show the consumption of chicken, meat, milk, cheese and eggs, but also fruits, including exotic varieties such as oranges and bananas. Other products like cocoa, chocolate, tapioca and marmalade were also present.¹⁴⁷

This is not to say that the extension of food varieties and supplies was synonymous with better nutrition for everybody. At the beginning of the 20th century, the lower working-class diet was primarily composed of bread, potatoes, tea and occasionally protein foods.¹⁴⁸ The cheap jam, biscuits or condensed skimmed milk that became a part of such

¹⁴⁴ Scholliers, Peter, and Patricia Van Den Eeckhout. "Feeding Growing Cities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Problems, Innovations, and Reputation." In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 74; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 105.

¹⁴⁵ Good Housekeeping in 1922, Woman's Own in 1932 and Woman in 1937; Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 243–5.

¹⁴⁶ Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, 248; See Addison, Paul, and British Broadcasting Corporation. *Now the War Is over: A Social History of Britain, 1945-51*. London: British Broadcasting Corp. : J. Cape, 1985.

¹⁴⁷ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 238–9; 285.

¹⁴⁸ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 207; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 55–6.

diets were not nutritionally beneficial either.¹⁴⁹ Due to the lack of proteins, fat and vitamins, a large part of the population suffered from nutritional deficiencies, a situation that became an issue with the development of nutritional science.¹⁵⁰ The growth of chemistry and food science, coupled with industrialisation of food since the 1850s, modified the perspective on commodities and dietary requirements. New concerns about food quality, adulteration, production and consumption emerged.¹⁵¹ During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, surveys about poverty and food consumption were conducted, demonstrating the inadequate diet of the lowest-income households.¹⁵² At the same time middle-class reforming movements, such as the Fabian Society, appeared and educational dietetic propaganda as well as the promotion of scientific housekeeping developed, parallel to the growing knowledge about bacteria and vitamins.¹⁵³

The question of food, nutrition and national health gained importance after the First World War. The science of nutrition had developed parallel to a greater social consciousness. The effect of malnutrition on the population became easier to diagnose as well as unacceptable. Concerning the authorities, the physical consequences of nutritional deprivations on the army recruitment for 1917-18 had been a source of concern, while the economy needed to be stimulated. In consequence, even if recalcitrant, the government got involved under the social and scientific pressure as well as the economic needs.¹⁵⁴ Scientists and social reformers conducted new surveys about diet and income,

¹⁴⁹ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 227; Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 207–9; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 55–6.

¹⁵⁰ A, C, E and Calcium in particular, see Table 9, Gazeley, Ian, and Andrew Newell. “The First World War and Working-Class Food Consumption in Britain.” *Economic Department Working Papers* 14 (2010), 22.

¹⁵¹ Rappaport, “Packaging China,” 125–6; Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 35–9.

¹⁵² Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 59–65.

¹⁵³ See Rowntree’s survey and its context in Gazeley, Ian. *Poverty in Britain, 1900-1965*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 22–3; Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 230; Brembeck, Helen. “The Twenty-First-Century ‘Food Consumer’: The Emergence of Consume Science.” In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 299.

¹⁵⁴ A good example would be the school milk scheme of 1934, offering milk to children and resolving, at least partially, the issue of milk surplus at the same time. Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 115–7, 125.

while nutritional campaigns became more prominent and propaganda used healthy food as a key marketing argument.¹⁵⁵

The same double-sided interest can be seen in the management of the food question during the Second World War. Diet and health were included in the food situation appreciation and propaganda, although the question of importations and self-sufficiency was the prime concern.

Pre-War and Wartime Food Situation

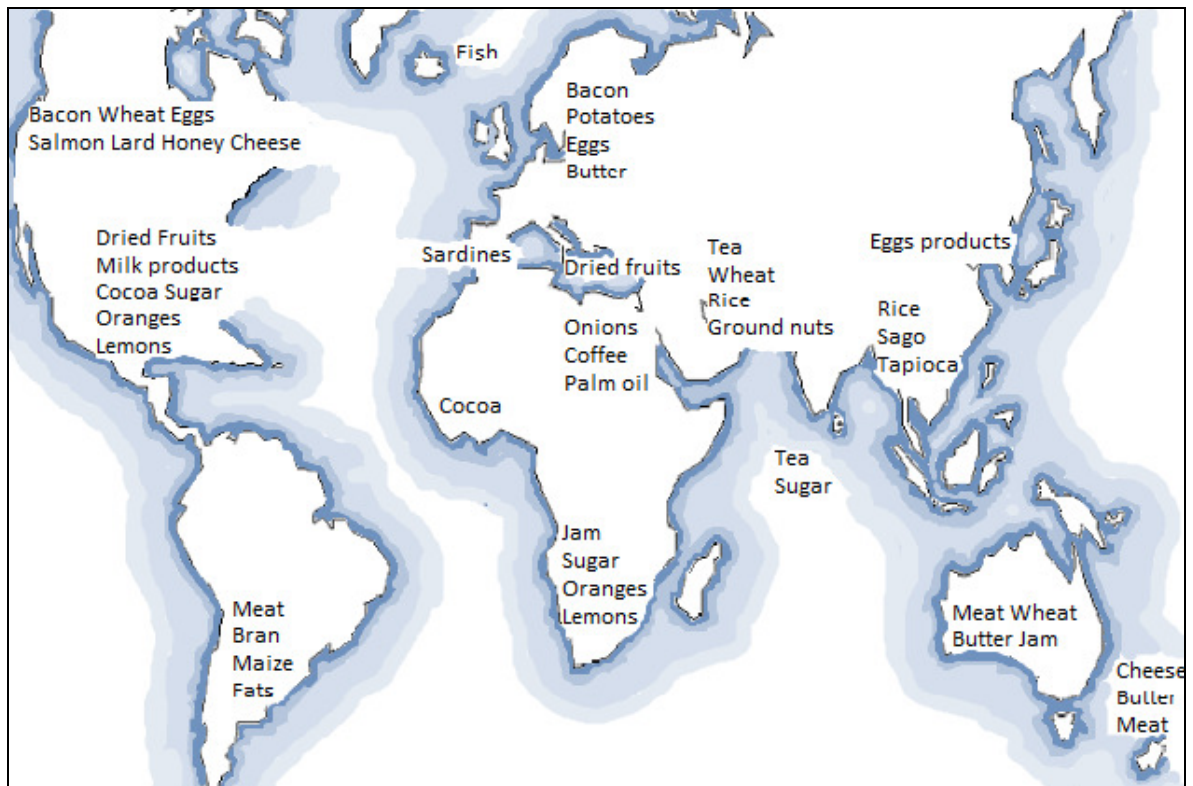
At the outbreak of the war, the country was heavily dependent on foreign suppliers, either for exotic commodities or for foods that could have been produced locally.¹⁵⁶ As illustrated on the map below, tropical products were brought in from the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America, while dairy products, fruits and vegetables, wheat, flour or meat were imported from North America, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand or Europe (see appendix 4).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Including the extensive survey conducted by John Boyd Orr in 1936, see Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900-1965*, 75–6; Smith, David F. “The Politics of Food and Nutrition Policies.” In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 399; 404–7; Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 273; 283; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 113–22’ 127–8.

¹⁵⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 17.

¹⁵⁷ Hammond, *Food*, 395.

Figure 6: Map of pre-war commodities provenance



Sources: F. Marquis, *The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton.*, pp. 210–11; R. Hammond, *Food*, p. 395, Table VI

Imported commodities represented, all considered, nearly 70% of the total food consumed by the British population and were omnipresent in British eating habits, from the poorest surviving on bread, margarine, sugar and tea to the better off enjoying orange juice at breakfast and after-dinner coffee.¹⁵⁸

The significance of imported food in the diet of the population is demonstrated by two surveys made about food and shopping by Mass Observation in November 1938 and during the summer of 1939.¹⁵⁹ Exotic products such as tea, coffee, cocoa, and sugar were mentioned repetitively in the shopping list given by the interviewees. Danish or 'Empire'

¹⁵⁸ Wilt, *Food for War*, 2; Reeves, Pember. *Round about a Pound a Week*. London: Virago Press, 1999; Garth, Margaret. *Home Management : A Comprehensive Guide-Book to the Management of the Household*. London, Edinburgh: Daily Express Publications, 1938.

¹⁵⁹ MOA TC WorktownCollection Box 31 Christmas and January Sales; MOA TC WorktownCollection Box 32 Food and Shopping.

butter from New Zealand was also mentioned by many. The importance of fruit, bananas and apples, but above all oranges, is also indisputable: on the fifty-seven questionnaires, less than ten interviewees did not buy oranges that week.¹⁶⁰ Naturally, about sixty testimonies cannot be generalised. Nonetheless, the weight of imported food on the eating habits of these customers, and in all probability the whole population, is incontestable.

Such dependence was not sustainable during a conflict. The Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, was acutely aware of the pre-war food situation, the pressure the war would put on the British food system, and the tasks to come:

All of us in this country had been accustomed to being able to get whatever food we wanted if we had money to buy it. In time of peace food was cheap and of wide variety: we were careless in its use and therefore wasteful [...]. As a nation, it was broadly true to say that we were indifferent to both our agriculture and horticulture. We could get cheap food abroad [...]. It was clear that it could not continue in war-time [...] I came to the conclusion that the only safe way was to make home agriculture the basis of our food supplies, and to bring into this country only such foods as were necessary to supplement our food production and to give a balanced diet to the public. It was easier said than done.¹⁶¹

Despite these difficulties, this drastic approach was implemented and the food imports decreased by about 50% between 1934-38 and 1945 (respectively 22.5 thousand and 11 thousand tons). However, as visible on the following table, the degree of import amendment depended on type of commodities (for the complete list, see appendix 5).

¹⁶⁰ MOA TC WorktownCollection Box 32 Food and Shopping.

¹⁶¹ Marquis, Frederick. *The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton*. London: Cassell & Company LTD, 1959, 192–3.

Figure 7: Imports of food into the United Kingdom (in thousands of tons)

Commodity	1934-38 Average	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Wheat	5,031	5,754	5,393	3,487	3,256	2,824	3,552
Wheat meal and flour	420	577	708	374	718	791	543
Meat (incl. carcasses)	1,096	1,128	1,073	1,047	1,051	1,182	832
Bacon and Ham	387	241	281	362	387	408	244
Canned meat	63	122	226	249	246	206	97
Sugar	2,168	1,526	1,652	768	1,425	1,155	1,066
Butter	480	264	218	134	152	153	190
Cheese	142	156	203	315	207	252	191
Processed milk	104	87	167	261	223	177	96
Eggs in shell	159	99	59	23	15	23	48
Dried fruits	175	128	210	198	181	253	155
Fresh fruits (incl. nuts)	1,502	839	115	131	58	213	398
Canned fruit, pulp and juices	257	202	112	114	72	125	87
Vegetables (incl. preserved)	705	392	105	67	23	58	79
Tea, coffee, cocoa	346	370	371	344	422	381	321

Source: R. Hammond, *Food*, p 392. Table II

Although these figures offer a good picture of the wartime food situation, other factors must be considered. For instance, the figures given suggest that the imports of meat were rather stable. However, the quantity needed for the forces, the decrease of home livestock (pigs: 58%, poultry: 26%, sheep: 25%) and the various shortages of imports between 1941 and 1943 must be taken into account to evaluate the quantity of fresh meat available for civilians.¹⁶² The importation of sugar, eggs, fruit and vegetables was drastically cut with consequence on food availability, price and, of course, consumption (while the import of canned meat increased significantly, especially after the introduction of the Lend-Lease agreement in 1941, modifying the eating habits of the population).¹⁶³

This limitation of supply and the regulation of food distribution had noticeable effects on the population, and the middle classes in particular. A comparison with pre-war consumption levels shows the impact of rationing on civilians. The rationing of sugar, for

¹⁶² Chester, D. *Lessons of the British War Economy*. Cambridge: U.p, 1951, 248.

¹⁶³ Hammond, R. *Food*. London: H.M. Stationery Off., 1951, 164; 174–5; 243–4; 392–3.

instance, represented a decrease of 25% then 50% of the pre-war average purchases.¹⁶⁴ The middle-class consumption of fresh eggs represents a decrease of nearly 80% (5.6 fresh eggs per week in 1937-8 to 1.2 in 1944) and similar significant diminution occurred for butter, fats and meat.¹⁶⁵

The war not only altered food choices, it also reorganised the relationships between civilians, the food business and the Government. By demonstrating the British dependence on food imports, the First World War had been a lesson on wartime food management and the importance of early planning of goods supplies.¹⁶⁶ Wartime inflation, increases of food price (61% by June 1916) and profiteering were other issues for a Government well aware of the potential crisis it could provoke.¹⁶⁷ Discussions about the question of food in wartime were already present in the 1920s, but the growing tensions in the 1930s further stimulated the debates.¹⁶⁸ Concerns about feeding the population were mainly about food production, stock and supply, although the question of nutrition was also tackled.¹⁶⁹ However, the prevention of major shortage, food scarcity and inflation was the first priority of the Government. Wartime food planning, including rationing, began in mid-1936 already and from 1940, governmental interventionism,

¹⁶⁴ Fine, Ben. *The World of Consumption*. London; New York: Routledge, 1993., 103; Calder, *The People's War*, 380–81.

¹⁶⁵ See Table 1.3 Weekly per capita food consumption, Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 40–1.

¹⁶⁶ National Conference on the Wider Aspects of Nutrition, British Medical Association. *Nutrition and the Public Health*. London: British Medical Assoc, 1939, 7; Gazeley and Newell, "The First World War and Working-Class Food", 6–7; Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 283; Nützenadel and Trentmann, "Introduction, Mapping Food and Globalization," 11.

¹⁶⁷ Gazeley and Newell, "The First World War and Working-Class Food", 3; 6.

¹⁶⁸ Wilt, *Food for War*, 36–7.

¹⁶⁹ Our Food Problem and its relation to our National Defences, published in 1939 by Le Gros Clark and Titmuss is a good example of the challenge presented by a long conflict. Other publications such as *Nutrition in War and Feeding the People in War-time* published in 1940 focus on the nutritional aspect of the issue Boyd-Orr, John. *Nutrition in War, Based on an Address Delivered to a Fabian Society Conference on Food Policy, February, 1940*. London: Fabian society, 1969; Boyd-Orr, John. *Feeding the People in War-Time*. London: Macmillan and Co. limited, 1940; Wilt, *Food for War*, 36–42; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 134.

supported by an increasingly powerful Ministry of Food, expanded through the implementation of policies regulating food production, importation, and distribution.¹⁷⁰

Wartime Food Regulations, Responses and Results

Due to debates and oppositions, rationing was postponed until the 8 January 1940. It started with sugar, butter, ham and bacon. The same year meat was rationed in March, tea, margarine and cooking fats in July. Preserves and jam were added in March 1941, cheese two months later. Egg distribution was controlled from June 1941 and milk from November.¹⁷¹ In July 1942 sweets and chocolates were also rationed.¹⁷² The quantities allowed fluctuated during the war, due to the variation of importations and/or war events. The invasion of Denmark and France, for instance, ended their importation of butter and sugar beet crops. New suppliers had to be found to replace them or to compensate those, such as Australia or New Zealand, which could not provide the quantity of meat or dairy they used to. Cheese rations, depending on American imports, underwent numerous variations, from 1oz at worst (May 1941) to 8oz at best (July 1942).¹⁷³

On average, the weekly adult rations were about:

- 4oz (113gr) of bacon and ham (8oz in 1940)
- Between 2 and 3 pints of milk
- Between 1 and 4 oz (28 and 113gr) of cheese (with a peak at 8 oz in 1942)
- 2 oz (46gr) of cooking fat
- 2oz (56gr) of butter
- 4 oz (113gr) of margarine
- 8 oz (226gr) of sugar (occasional bonus/exchange for preserve rations occurred);
- 2 oz (56gr) of tea
- 12oz (340gr) of sweets per month
- 1 egg per week, if available, but often replaced by dried eggs

¹⁷⁰ Smith, David. *Nutrition in Britain : Science, Scientists, and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. London; New York: Routledge, 1997, 109, 113; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 136; Wilt, *Food for War*, 58–63.

¹⁷¹ Minns, Raynes. *Bombers and Mash : The Domestic Front 1939-45*. London: Virago, 1980, Chronology of war.

¹⁷² Hammond, *Food*, 283.

¹⁷³ Hammond, *Food*, 114–5, 121, 283, 395, 402-3; Minns, *Bombers and Mash* Chronology; *The People's War*, 380–1.

Meat was rationed by price equivalent to circa a pound of meat for an adult (after various increases and decreases between 1940 and 1941, the ration was established at 1 shilling and 10 pence, half for children).¹⁷⁴ Poultry, fish, offal and sausages as well as fruit and vegetables were not rationed, but became scarce and often expensive. Additionally to the limitation of quantities and availability, the quality of most commodities significantly deteriorated.¹⁷⁵ Another wartime change was the rise of flour extraction from 73% to 85% in April 1942, which resulted in the consumption of brown bread and flour instead of the usual white ones.¹⁷⁶

Food restrictions and scarcity influenced the behaviours and priorities of the population. The motivation for eating out, for instance, became more complex.¹⁷⁷ While prior to the war it could have been a necessity due to work and travel, or an entertaining and socialising event, eating out in wartime could be motivated by pragmatism and a desire to spare rations. According to John Burnett, 'more people ate out than ever before'.¹⁷⁸ Angus Calder also reports the massive increase of meals taken out, whether it was in restaurant, cafés, tea shops or communal feedings.¹⁷⁹

While eating out to spare rations could be considered as morally disputable because it prevented a fair share of the wartime sacrifice, its legality was never contested. The black market, on the other hand, was highly illegal. According to Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, the black market in Britain was neither extensively developed nor organised on a large scale. Infractions were very common, generally on a local basis, especially from farmers, but also at every level of food distribution, more through the circumvention of the

¹⁷⁴ Hammond, *Food*, 402–3; Minns, *Bombers and Mash*, Chronology.

¹⁷⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 36; Chester, *Lessons of the British War Economy*, 201.

¹⁷⁶ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 139–40.

¹⁷⁷ Julier, Alice P. "Meals: 'Eating In' and 'Eating Out.'" In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 347.

¹⁷⁸ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 226.

¹⁷⁹ Referencing the Sheffield Telegraph Calder, *The People's War*, 385–6.

regulations than stolen goods.¹⁸⁰ The black market and the official response to it evolved correspondingly to the food situation, while individual situations influenced illegal practices and their justifications.¹⁸¹ According to Mark Roodhouse, illegal purchases could be a source of internal conflict, due to the dilemma between desire and a respectable image. Nevertheless, a sense of entitlement or anger was also present in testimonies, implying a link between the degradation of the situation, the dissatisfaction of the population and a willingness to contravene the law.¹⁸²

Food restrictions and dissatisfaction regarding the unfairness of its distribution were recognised by the Government and measures were taken. In order to regulate the non-rationed commodities, ease the situation and calm the population, a point system, complementary to rationing, was implemented in December 1941.¹⁸³ In addition to the fixed rations which required the customers to be registered at their retailers, the monthly sixteen points per person allowed the liberty of choice regarding what and where they did their shopping.¹⁸⁴ Like rationing, the point system evolved over time. Beginning with canned fish, meat and beans, the scheme was extended firstly in January 1942 with dried fruits and pulses, in February with canned fruits, tomatoes and peas, in April with breakfast cereals and condensed milk and, finally, biscuits in August.¹⁸⁵ Regarding eating out, a set of regulations was implemented, limiting the quantity of protein allowed per meal (July 1940) and a restricted charge for a meal at 5 shillings (June 1942).¹⁸⁶ As various additional charges were allowed, luxury places easily bent the regulations; however, public discontentment was contained.¹⁸⁷ Food support was also provided through

¹⁸⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?" 131; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 152; 157; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 21.

¹⁸¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 156; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 195–210.

¹⁸² Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 194–202.

¹⁸³ A similar system was proposed in 1918, but rejected by the Ministry of Food committee. Hammond, *Food*, 6.

¹⁸⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 19–22.

¹⁸⁵ Hammond, *Food*, 202–3: 283.

¹⁸⁶ Minns, *Bombers and Mash*, Chronology.

¹⁸⁷ See Burnett, *England Eats out*, 233–239.

canteens, milk and meals at school and subsidised restaurants (British Restaurants).¹⁸⁸ Concerning the health of the population, vitamin schemes were implemented or extended since 1941 under the form of free blackcurrant, orange juice and cod liver oil for young children, supplementation for pregnant and nursing women, children and invalids, and fortified flour and margarine.¹⁸⁹ Campaigns such as 'Dig for Victory', encouraging private food production in gardens and allotments as well as keeping rabbits and hens, were set up, while educational propaganda leaflets and broadcasts were largely distributed to the population.¹⁹⁰

This is not to say that these measures were of great impact, at least not for everyone. For instance, as demonstrated by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Derek Oddy, the use of the vitamin schemes was rather poor and depended on the social group, with a significant higher utilisation by middle classes than lower ones.¹⁹¹ The benefit of the increase of meals and milk at school (respectively 4% and 55% prior to the war to 40% and 70% at the end of the war) is indisputable, although the distribution of vital nutriment and vitamin stayed unequal. The reduction of sugar may have resulted in a general decrease of dental caries, but children with rickets and tuberculosis were still a concern.¹⁹² Regarding other measures, communal feeding was not as successful as expected either. British Restaurants, for example, had a small impact according to Peter Atkins.¹⁹³ Indeed, an estimation of 2% of the population eating in British Restaurants supports Atkins' claim that their contribution to wartime feeding was marginal.¹⁹⁴ The campaign 'Dig for Victory', aimed at involving the population in its own feeding, had more success. A survey conducted in the middle of the war showed that over half the manual workers asked had

¹⁸⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 33.

¹⁸⁹ Smith, "The Politics of Food and Nutrition" 405; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 32; Calder, *The People's War*, 385.

¹⁹⁰ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 150–1.

¹⁹¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?"; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 163.

¹⁹² Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 163–5.

¹⁹³ Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time" 151.

¹⁹⁴ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 159; Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time" 151.

a garden or a plot.¹⁹⁵ By autumn 1942, 3.7 million people keeping poultry had given up their egg registration (and probably many others stayed registered despite keeping hens).¹⁹⁶ However, not only was such production seasonal, limiting food availability, but urban workers and those without access to land were disadvantaged and depended mainly on shops.¹⁹⁷

Conclusion

This section has presented the historical context of the British food system, in particular the role of the global and imperial market, that influenced the eating habits of the population, and the drastic constraints put on that system and the considerable food importations existing prior to the war. Such knowledge about pre-war food practices is necessary to comprehend the effect of the wartime food restrictions on the population. However, an important part of food practices also related to the social class affiliation of the consumers. There is no doubt that the wartime food situation has had repercussions on the whole population, yet with significant differences between social classes and individuals' circumstances. As demonstrated by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Michael Nelson, these disparities were not always to the benefit of the better off, whose diet noticeably degraded.¹⁹⁸ Due to the variety of commodities, the quantity of protein food as well as the significant quantities of imported commodities in their pre-war diet, the restrictions, shortages and disappearance of their usual ingredients was more felt by the middle classes. The degree of degradation and the perception of the wartime food difficulties were substantially related to personal pre-war habits. Then again, a contextualisation of this socio-economic group and its specificities is necessary to comprehend their wartime experiences.

¹⁹⁵ Calder, *The People's War*, 430.

¹⁹⁶ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 151.

¹⁹⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?"; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 151.

¹⁹⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 45; Nelson, "Social-Class Trends in British Diet"

2. Middle-Classes and their Diet

Like the historical context of British food practices, the specificities of the particular social group studied, namely the middle classes, is a key aspect to comprehending the impact of the war on its eating habits. Thus, this last section firstly presents the various criteria of middle-class determination and their history. Secondly, it discusses the diet of this social group. Finally, based on the analysis of two contemporary surveys, it offers a list of middle-class common commodities compared to the wartime food restrictions.

Defining the middle classes is challenging, because of the complexity of such definitions and the impossibility of getting a general agreement on its terms.¹⁹⁹ While some criteria, such as income, can be objectively measured, others are subjective because related to the style of life or attitudes.²⁰⁰ To quote John Burnett, middle-class affiliation ‘was more a question of habits, tastes, values and aspiration which were quite distinct from those of the classes above and below them’.²⁰¹ In spite of the significance of these cultural dimensions, their standardisation is problematic. Moreover, as stated by Savage and Miles, the elements used to determine social class evolved over time, and various intellectual and political climates influenced the historical explanations of class formation.²⁰² In addition, challenging the perception of a homogeneous social group, they demonstrate the plurality of the British working class and their division into sub-categories according to their income and status.²⁰³ The comprehension of the British middle class faces the same issues about criteria and characteristics and their evolution and its perception in time as well as a significant plurality.

¹⁹⁹ Burnett, John. *A Social History of Housing. 1815-1985*. 2nd ed. London; New York: Methuen, 1986, 184; Lewis, Roy, and Angus Maude. *The English Middle Classes*. London: Penguin Books, 1953, 11–13; McKibbin, Ross. *Classes and Cultures : England 1918-1951*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 44.

²⁰⁰ Gunn, Simon. “Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 56, no. 1 (2005), 53; Gunn, Simon, and Rachel Bell. *Middle Classes : Their Rise and Sprawl*. London: Cassell, 2002, 22–23.

²⁰¹ Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985*, 184.

²⁰² Savage, Michael, and Andrew Miles. *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

²⁰³ Savage and Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class*, ix; 3–4; 17; 11–14.

Middle class: Historical Summary

The concept of the middle class emerged in the second half of the 18th century. The designation 'middle-class' qualified those who did not correspond to the two predominant social divisions at the time, the rich and the poor/the landed and the labourer. The differentiation was based on the need to earn a living, but through trade and manufacturing instead of rent or manual work. Nevertheless, according to Gunn, the involvement of this 'middling sort' into the political, religious and moral spheres between the 1780s and the 1840s would be the main element to consider when describing the origin of this new social group. By the 1840s middle-class affiliation was recognised through specific values, non-conformist ideas and political opposition. In the following decades, the division between manual labour and mental culture was reinforced. This distinction influenced the recognition of middle-class intellectual and social characteristics. A specific lifestyle, including employment of servants, travelling and the emergence of a new kind of consumerism, was added to these factors of determination.²⁰⁴

Such perspective demands to be nuanced. Concerning middle-class political involvement, for instance, Mayer argues that the lowest part of the social group could be politically active and cohesive, but only in times of severe stress. Moreover, he affirms that their status was dependent on their location (higher in small country town, minimal in large cities).²⁰⁵ Such a statement is supported by Richard Trainor, who discusses regional differences of speech, housing, dress and diet, but also power and leadership involvement (upper middle class in cities and lower middle class in small country towns). Additionally, Trainor claims that compensatory qualities, including the necessity to keep up appearances, developed among the lower middle class unable to compete with the lifestyle of the upper ones, especially regarding the employment of servants.²⁰⁶ In other

²⁰⁴ Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes*, 14–18; 23; 38–41; 53.

²⁰⁵ Mayer, Arno J. "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem." *The Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 3 (1975), 424; 427.

²⁰⁶ Trainor Richard. "The Middle Classes." In *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Vol. 3, 1840-1950*,

words, similarly to the working classes studied by Savage and Miles, important divisions existed between the higher and lower members of the middle classes, confirming the existence of plural and complex relationships.

Between the beginning of the 20th century and the outbreak of the Second World War, the composition and perception of the middle class changed. The white-collared employed, living in a suburban house, became more representative of the middle class than his wealthy employer.²⁰⁷ Occupation became the official determinant of class categorisation on the postulate that a hierarchy of professions according to skills was the most reliable social indicator.²⁰⁸ Used since the 1911 census, the Registrar General's Social Class Scheme classified the population into three main classes and two intermediaries ones, considered as 'buffering zones':

- I: Upper and Middle classes
- II: Intermediate
- III: Skilled workmen
- IV: Intermediate
- V: Unskilled labourers

The creator of this classification, Stevenson, defended his method, arguing that professional criteria could be extended to the whole population, were more precise and free of regional particularities in contrast with the selection of representative localities previously used.²⁰⁹ His arguments were accepted and the Registrar became the official instrument of social class determination. The use of occupation as a key element of socio-economic definition persisted because, as stated by Armstrong, it is the only social

Martin Dauton ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 1–2; 47–48; 63.

²⁰⁷ Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes*, 54.

²⁰⁸ Szreter Simon. "The Genesis of the Registrar-General's Social Classification of Occupations." *The British Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 4 (1984), 539; Pevalin, David, and David Rose. "The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification: Unifying Official and Sociological Approaches to the Conceptualisation and Measurement of Social Class in the United Kingdom." *Sociétés contemporaines* 45–46, no. 1 (2002): 75–106, 76.

²⁰⁹ Stevenson, T. H. C. "The Vital Statistics of Wealth and Poverty." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 91, no. 2 (1928): 207–30, 211–212.

classification criterion considering each individual in an objective and systematic way.²¹⁰ However, as stated by Szreter, despite its qualities, occupation has limitations that must be taken into account.²¹¹

Occupational classification and its limitations

The social classification of occupation system has essential qualities, simplicity to begin with, but shows limitations. For instance, the three social classes (and two intermediary ones) prevent an accurate determination of social status due to the rigidity of the classification.²¹² Moreover, the system was designed for male occupations only.²¹³ This social assimilation of wives to their husband's activity is a main concern. The non-acquaintance of the informal, intermittent or low-remunerated female employment (in family businesses, part-time occupations or working at home) led to a misrepresentation of the reality, but also biases the family income and potential food budget considerably.²¹⁴ Concerning this study, two facts nuance this issue. Firstly, as demonstrated by Claire Langhamer, people at the time showed a propensity to marry in the same social group, and consequently to share similar cultural backgrounds.²¹⁵ Secondly, none of the female diarists selected was concerned by such issue. They were single and full-time employed (teacher, secretary) or housewives. The only exception would be the youngest diarist who got married during the war. However, her husband was conscripted and she kept her job during the war. The other exception would be the upper class diarist who was involved in the management of the family estate, but such activities did not influence her social class affiliation.

²¹⁰ Armstrong, W.A. "The Use of Information about Occupation." In *Nineteenth-Century Society : Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data.*, E.A. Wrigley ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, 202.

²¹¹ Szreter Simon, "The Genesis of the Registrar-General's Social Classification of Occupations," 540.

²¹² Szreter Simon, "The Genesis of the Registrar-General's Social Classification of Occupations," 523,535.

²¹³ Szreter, Simon. "Fertility, Social Class, Gender, and the Professional Model: Statistical Explanation and Historical Significance." *The Economic History Review* 68, no. 2 (2015), 709.

²¹⁴ Hatton, Timothy J, and Roy E Bailey. "Womens Work in Census and Survey, 1911-1931." *The Economic History Review* 54, no. 1 (2001): 87–107, 88–89.

²¹⁵ Langhamer, Claire. "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England." *Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (2007), 185–186.

Another issue, related specifically to the period studied, is the modification of the occupational distribution due to the war effort. The concern is of importance as a wartime occupation could have modified the categorisation of workers without changing their cultural affiliation. Regarding the sources employed in this study, this last issue is rather inconsequential as the war effort did not involve significant change of occupation for the diarists. Nonetheless, these limits demonstrate the need for additional measurable criteria of social categorisation, namely income and standards of living.

Social class determinants: Income and standards of living

Income and standards of living (housing, education, and other material elements such as owning a car or a telephone) could both be included in the determination of social class. However, income was the major dimension taken into account in many surveys during the interwar period, with the determination of middle-class earnings from £250 to between £700 and £1,000 a year.²¹⁶

The lower income defined (£250) was, according to McKibbin, the least amount needed to afford a basic middle-class lifestyle.²¹⁷ Clothing and a special care for appearance, in relation to work for instance, represents an important budget item for middle-class as demonstrated by Prais and Houthakker who give an average of 9% of the weekly expenditures per household on clothes (while housing represents 12.3% and food 24.3% in the survey of middle-class household budget published by Massey).²¹⁸ Interestingly, the percentage dedicated to clothes is very similar for all middle-class sub-divisions while the expenditure on housing, food, transportation, education, holidays, and so on change

²¹⁶ Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*,; Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households"; Cole, G., and Margaret Cole. *The Condition of Britain*. London: V. Gollancz Ltd., 1937, 62–63.

²¹⁷ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 44.

²¹⁸ Prais, S. J, and Hendrik S Houthakker. *The Analysis of Family Budgets, with an Application to Two British Surveys Conducted in 1937-9 and Their Detailed Results*,. Cambridge: University Press, 1955, 41; In addition, 48.5% of the income is spend on other items such as travelling, tobacco, newspapers, books, entertainments, education, doctors, pensions, hairdressers, laundry, domestic helps, holiday and so on with between 60s 6.5d and 179s 6.25d depending of the household income. Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class" 17; 180.

accordingly to the income available.²¹⁹ These variations of spending were, in the words of McKibbin, less important than the shared specific lifestyle and attitude.²²⁰ Nevertheless, these figures suggest that the maintenance costs of this middle-class way of life could severely limit the room for manoeuvre of those on the bottom line of income, a limitation that would influence their adaptation to the wartime situation.

While occupation and income were, at the time studied, the main criterion of social categorisation, standards of living could also be taken into account, as demonstrated by the recommendation made for the National Food Surveys regarding criteria of middle-class classification:

Households where the head of the household was earning at least £6 a week before the war; where head is now professional man; a worker in a managerial grade, on own account (except in small way); or living on private income. Household where the standard of living is clearly middle-class, e.g. garage for car; maid or maids kept; gardener employed. A telephone is often an indication of a middle-class household, but this feature should be considered with the occupation of the head of the household. A privately owned house may be an indication, but it is possible to find working class owning or buying a house. Consider also the size and the value of the house, the occupation of the head, and the standard of living.²²¹

Concerning this study, the social class categorisation of the respondents and diarists has been dictated by the information available. Therefore occupation, particularly the differentiation between manual and non-manual work, remained the main criterion, especially regarding the replies to the April 1943 Directive, as it was mostly the only indication offered. However, occupation was common to distinguish social affiliation in the 1940s and was most certainly a socio-economic determinant for the Mass Observers and their contemporaries, making it relevant to use today.

²¹⁹ Interestingly too, the fact that working-class expenditure income percentage on clothes and housing are similar with housing 12% and clothing 9% while spending on food are much higher with 40% of the income dedicated to commodities (excl. drinking). Seers, Dudley. "The Working-Class Share in Pre-War Consumption." *Bulletin of the Oxford Institute of Statistics*, 1948, 181–194.

²²⁰ McKibbin, R. 1998. *Classes and cultures*, p. 102

²²¹ MAF 300/4 FNS 53.1.

This focus on social determination has its *raison d'être* due to the important influence social class has on food habits, tastes and perspective.

Social class and food habits

Man feeds not only on proteins, fats, carbohydrates, but also on symbols, myths, fantasies. [...] The selection of his food is made not only according to physiological requirements, perceptual and cognitive mechanisms, but also on the basis of cultural and social representations which results in additional constraints on what can and cannot be eaten.²²²

In a few sentences, Claude Fischler summarised the complexity of human food consumption and identified the role of the cultural environment in food tastes and habits. His statement has been supported by numerous studies, demonstrating the significance of social class in food selection, preparation and consumption. 'Food serves to express personal and group identities', says Warren Belasco, while Sydney Mintz affirms that 'food choices and habits reveal distinction of age, sex, culture, and even occupation', and Gil Valentine states that 'consumption plays a critical part in the production of our identities'.²²³ The social meaning of food habits can be seen in the food offered, accepted, refused and shared, as social identity is created through distinctive similarities and differences of practices between social groups.²²⁴ Hence, it can be said that social identities influence food practices. As maintained by Alice Julier, 'the social differentiation is the hallmark of consumption'.²²⁵

This social differentiation, or distinction to refer to the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is the main factor to consider. While financial means affect the extension of food choices, the notion of preferences must also be taken into account.²²⁶ This

²²² Fischler, "Food Habits, Social Change and the Nature/Culture Dilemma," 937.

²²³ Belasco, Warren James. *Food: The Key Concepts*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2008, 8; Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 2; Valentine, "Eating in," 491.

²²⁴ Julier, "Meals" 347; James, Allison. "How British Is British Food?" In *Food, Health, and Identity*, Patricia Caplan ed., London; New York: Routledge, 1997, 72; Counihan, Carole. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1997, 2–3.

²²⁵ Julier, "Meals" 347.

²²⁶ Lien, Marianne E., and Eivind Jacobson. "Food Marketing In *The Handbook of Food Research*, Anne

relationship between social class and food preferences is a crucial point in this work. As stated by Bourdieu, tastes are 'the systematic expression of a particular class' and tensions exist 'between the tastes of luxury (or freedom) and the tastes of necessity'.²²⁷ The association of food choices and the middle class has also been discussed by Stephen Mennell. According to him, a correlation exists between the emergence of the middle class and the focus on quality instead of quantity that occurred as food security and variety increased, since 'when the possibilities of quantitative consumption for the expression of social superiority have been exhausted, the qualitative possibilities were inexhaustible'.²²⁸ The importance of food taste as a social identifier was recognised by Mass Observation itself as indicated by an explicit question about eating habits in the Directive on social class June 1939.²²⁹

These ways of conceptualizing the relationship between food choice and social identity are essential to understanding the intimate connection between social class and food consumption. This is even more important when extraordinary conditions affect these habits. The wartime food situation impacted the food practices of the population and in order to define such impact, the pre-war food habits have to be ascertained. Because the testimonies studied in this research come from middle-class diarists and respondents, the next part of this chapter focuses on the eating habits of the British middle class prior to the Second World War.

British Middle-class Pre-War diet

This sub-chapter presents the comparative analysis of two contemporary sources used to outline the eating and purchasing habits of middle-class households. These sources are a survey on the expenditure of middle-class families made in 1938-39 (from here on Massey

Murcott, Warren Belasco, and Peter Jackson eds., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 265; Holm, "Sociology of Food Consumption," 334.

²²⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre Nice, Richard. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. New York; London: Routledge, 2004, 177.

²²⁸ Mennell, Stephen. "On the Civilizing of Appetite." *Theory, Culture & Society* 4, no. 2 (1987), 389.

²²⁹ Hinton, James. "'The "Class" Complex': Mass-Observation and Cultural Distinction in Pre-War Britain." *Past and Present* 199, no. 1 (2008), 209.

Survey) and the study of William Crawford *The People's Food* published in 1938 (from here on Crawford Study).²³⁰

The Massey Survey

The survey covers the expenditures (housing, clothing, travelling, education and food) of 1,360 middle-class households. The participants were civil servants, local government officers and teachers, all members of civil servant associations and having a salary exceeding £250 per year.²³¹ The composition, age and number of members by household were taken into account with an average of 3.27 members (two adults and 1.3 children) per family.²³² The survey was conducted between April 1938 and January 1939 at the rate of quarterly enquiries (April, July, October, and January). The households were sub-categorised into four incomes as follow:

Figure 8: Division of household by income

	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700+
Number of budgets	598	507	186	69

Source: Massey p.168

The enquiry forms included questions on the composition and age of the household and the expenses regarding housing, education, and taxes, gas, electricity, light and fuel expenditures, plus food (quantity and costs of each items purchased), as well as any garden or allotment products. As for clothing, a special survey of one year was undertaken by 706 of the 1,360 households, in addition to the four weeks one.²³³ The results about food expenditures are given per household, per head, and per food items. The meals taken outside of the home as well as inside the home produced food which is included in the analysis (see list appendix 6). Unfortunately, the quantities of food purchased are not

²³⁰ Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*,; Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households."

²³¹ Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households" 160.

²³² With a ratio of 2.26 of 18 and over, 0.23 between 14 and 18, 0.52 between 5 and 14 and 0.26 under five years old

²³³ Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households" 163–168.

presented, an important difference with the Crawford Study, preventing a complete comparison between the two sources.

The Crawford Study

Food quantities are not the only difference between the two surveys. While Massey focused on the middle classes and their spending, Crawford covered all the social classes, concentrating on the food purchased and consumption in urban areas.²³⁴ Eight cities were selected according to their representativeness and to ensure reasonably sure results on eating habits that allow comparison with others local or national figures.²³⁵ The enquiries were carried out from October 1936 to March 1937 (minus two weeks at Christmas). This period represents a winter diet that can explain some economic differences due to seasonal price variation, as well as the seasonal availability of certain commodities.

The survey included a total of 4,946 budgets. Their categorisation was based on the income and occupation of the chief earner of the family, the kind of housing, the employment of servants, the education of the children, as well as owning a car or a telephone.²³⁶ This social classification was expressed as follows (the categories presented by Crawford have been inversed from lower to higher class in order to correspond to the other source format):

Figure 9: Budgets by social class

D Unskilled / unemployed working class (996)	C Skilled working class (2115)	B Lower middle class (962)	A Upper middle class (458)	AA Wealthy (415)
Under £125	£125 to 249	£250 to 499	£500 to 999	£1,000+

Source: Crawford, pp.28, 316-8

²³⁴ As well as method of purchase, preservation and daily meals provided Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 27.

²³⁵ London, Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Cardiff Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 27–28.

²³⁶ Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 11; 28; 308; 316–320.

Due to the variable number of members of each household, a standardisation of the budget was performed and the expenditure and quantity of food purchased were calculated per capita rather than per equivalent adult male (see list appendix 7).²³⁷ The classes B and A as determined by Crawford correspond to the income criterion of the middle classes of the Massey Survey, while their occupational criteria are consistent with the categorisation presented by Armstrong.²³⁸ Therefore A and B, representing the middle classes, are the two sub-groups that have mainly been taken into account for the comparative examination.

Limitations

These sources offer valuable information, although they present some limitations of use as well. All the participants of the Massey Survey were civil servants, limiting their use as representative of the middle class in general. As for the Crawford Study, the participants were all selected in large cities, there again limiting their representativeness.²³⁹ The main issue with these sources is the limitation put on their comparison because of their individual particularities. For instance, the two sources have different categorisations for commodities. Sausages, for example, are combined with meat pie in the Massey Survey, while Crawford included them with rabbit, stew, or meat pies within the heading 'other meat dishes', without giving their related expenses. More significantly, the quantity of food purchased is not indicated in the Massey Survey and the same problem occurs regarding some commodities (among others, fruit) in the Crawford Study. In both cases, this lack of information prevents any comparison between sources, but also the

²³⁷ The per capita approach considers each member as one unit. The per equivalent adult male approach takes the level of requirement of each member accordingly to the gender and the age based on various coefficients (adult men 100%, adult women 85%, children between 80% and 55% depending on their age). A family of two adults and two children (one under 6, one between 6 and 14) would be considered as 4 units "per capita", while it would be estimated at 3.2 units with the "man value" calculation ($1 \times 1 + 1 \times 0.85 + 1 \times 0.80 + 1 \times 0.55$). Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 125–127.

²³⁸ Armstrong, "The Use of Information about Occupation," 191–310.

²³⁹ It must be notice that the quantity of food produced at home (eggs, vegetables and fruits) is only a small part of the households studied by Massey (average: 360 on 1360 households). The quantity of vegetables and fruits produced is, according to the survey's author, negligible and the number of eggs no significant enough to be taken into account (for the survey as a whole). Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households" 169; 174.

evaluation of the correlation between the price, quantity and quality of commodities. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, these sources provide precious information about the kind of commodities consumed prior to the war and the relationship between such commodities and the social class of their consumers.

Analysis of the Sources and British Middle-class Food Patterns

In order to accurately compare the two sources, it was necessary to verify the compatibility of the sources employed and to standardise their data. The first step was to define the average of food expenditures according to social class for each source and confirm the similarity of their social categorisation.²⁴⁰

Figure 10: Incomes and weekly expenditure per head

Massey Survey		£250-350 11s 2d	£350-500 11s 6d	£500-700 12s 11d	£700+ 13s 1d	
Crawford Study	Under £125 (D): 5s 10d £129-249 (C): 7s 11d	£250-499 (B) 12s 6d		£500-999 (A) 16s 2d		

Source: Massey (total food exc. meals away), p.172; Crawford, p.11

As can be seen in the table, despite the differences of classification (more specific in the Massey Survey), a correspondence exists between the two sources, especially around £500 of income.

The second step taken was to standardise the figures given by the sources. The expenses were calculated in pennies (d) and the weights given in ounces (oz) unless pounds (lb) made more sense. The calculation per family in Massey was transformed per capita similarly to the data of the Crawford Study.²⁴¹ This standardisation allowed the

²⁴⁰ In order to standardise the reading of the table, the categorisation made by Crawford (from the highest to the lowest income) has been inverted to be similar to Massey (from the lowest to the highest income).

²⁴¹ Household in Massey respectively comprised 2.98/3.39/3.56/3.97 members (including 2 adults).

comparative analysis of the expenses and the determination of the major disparities and similarities between the publications:

Figure 11: Comparative table of weekly expenses between the two sources (per head, in d)

	Massey Survey				Crawford Study	
Income	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700+	£250-499 (B)	£500-999 (A)
Food budget	11s 2d	11s 6d	12s 11d	13s 1d	12s 6d	16s 2d
Meat	17.0	18.2	20.8	20.6	24.1 (incl. sausage/offal)	29.1 (incl. sausage/offal)
Bacon/ham	2.3	6.1	7.4	6.8	5.8	6.3
Sausages/meat pies	2.17	2.36	2.86	3.19	-	-
Offal	1.67	1.07	1.28	1.43	-	-
Chicken/rabbit	1.34	1.62	1.96	3.5	-	-
Total meat	24.48	29.35	34.30	35.52	29.9	35.4
Fish(fresh/dried/cured)	3.84	4.1	5.83	6.32	7	9.9
Milk	16.3	16.3	18.8	18.9	15.3	17.4
Butter	9.58	9.43	10.64	9.88	9.1	10.2
Margarine	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.7
Cheese	2.8	1.9	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.7
Eggs	7.8	7.7	9.9	9.5	9.3	10.4
Bread	6.42	6.29	6.79	6.38	7.8	7.6
Flour	2.1	1.9	2	1.6	2.5	2.5
Oatmeal	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.4	-	-
Potatoes	3	2.9	3.2	3.2	4.5	4.4
Vegetables	2.67	2.57	2.93	3.44	5.2	8.3
Tomatoes	1.7	1.7	2.1	1.8	-	-
Sugar	3.4	3.6	4.1	3.8	2.7	3
Tea	2.3	4.9	5.3	4.9	6	7.1
Coffee	0.59	0.74	0.91	1.38	1.5	2.8
Cocoa	0.59	0.52	0.28	0.19	0.7	0.7

As can be seen in the table, the analysis shows modest differences, if any, for many commodities. The main differences of expenses concern fish, vegetables, tea and coffee (less important in the Massey Survey). The table shows visible social differences of expenditures, usually reflecting the progression in the social scale, except for offal and

cocoa, on which spending are more important in lower classes. Such a finding could suggest a higher food intake; however, the question of quantity and quality is also an important factor to be considered. Unfortunately, a comparison of quantity is impossible, due to the lack of data in the Massey Survey.

Similar to the expenses table, a social class variation is visible for other commodities as can be seen in the following table about fruit. The difference of classification for fruit and the little information about the quantity purchased made it difficult to compare. However, according to the given expenditures, fruit was important in middle-class eating habits:

Figure 12: Fruit weekly expenditure (per head in d)

	Massey Survey				Crawford Study	
	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700+	£250-499 (B)	£500-999 (A)
Apples/Oranges/Bananas	5.91	6.14	7.5	6.81		
Other fruits/nuts	2.83	3	4.5	4.5		
Total	8.74	9.44	12	11.31		
Fresh fruit					9.9	12.9
Dried fruit/peels					1.3	1.7

Source: Massey, p.182; Crawford, pp. 257-63

The correlation between fruit consumption and social class is especially visible in the Crawford Study:

Figure 13: Expenditures on fruit according to class

	D	C	B	A	AA
	< £125	£125-249	£250-499	£500-999	£1000+
Fresh Fruit	1.7d	3.9d	9.9d	12.9d	15.3d
Dried Fruit	0.4d	0.7d	1.3d	1.7d	1.7d
Tinned Fruit	0.4d	0.9d	1.7d	2.4d	2.3d
Total Fruit	2.5d	5.5d	12.9d	17.2d	19.3d

Source: Crawford, p. 257-63

According to these figures, fruit was essentially eaten by the better off. It seems that the kind of fruit consumed was class related too. Referring to a food enquiry conducted in

1936, Crawford presents a preference for apples and oranges in the upper and middle classes and for bananas in the working class.²⁴² The weekly expenses on cakes, pastry and biscuits in the two surveys confirm the correlation between social class and eating habits:

Figure 14: Weekly expenses for bakery (per head, in d)

	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700 +
Buns, cakes, pastries etc...	4.87d	5d	5.54d	6.4d
Biscuits	2.85d	3.17d	3.01d	2.89d
Total	7.72d	8.17d	8.54d	8.93d

Source: Massey, p.181

Figure 15: Weekly expenses for cake and biscuit (per head, in d)

D	C	B	A	AA
Under £125	£125 to 249	£250 to 499	£500 to 999	£1000+
0.9d	1.8d	3.1d	4.1d	3.1d

Source: Crawford, p. 169

The significant variation between the two surveys seems to be explained by a difference of the categorisation. Buns could have been categorised under bread for the Massey Survey and pastries could not have been taken into account in the Crawford Study. However, the spending on bakery products reveals their importance in the diet of these middle-class people, a point to be considered in the analysis of the wartime food situation. Other commodities had to be taken into account in household budgets, as visible in the following table:

²⁴² Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 256–263.

Figure 16: Specific items purchased in Massey Survey (per head, in d)

	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700 +
Fish (fried and chips)	0.58	0.44	0.21	0.06
Proprietary cereals	1.08	1.14	1	1.69
Jam, marmalade	1.67	1.57	1.86	2.06
Sweets, chocolate, ice cream	2.68	3.02	3.30	3.27
Dried milk	0.92	0.88	0.70	0.38

Source: Massey, p.182-3

As can be seen on the table, fish and chips and dried milk are the only commodities that expenses significantly decrease conversely to income, suggesting their use rather in the poorest sections of the population and a potential prejudice from the higher classes.

The findings of the Massey Survey correspond to the description given by Crawford: fruits, marmalade, coffee, or jellies were markers of upper classes, while dripping and margarine were predominantly eaten by the lower classes. Dishes and meals were also socially connoted: soups and savouries were consumed mainly by the wealthy, for instance. Consuming protein-rich food such as meat, eggs or fish for breakfast was also a habit of the better off. Actually, eggs and bacon are described as a 'mark of social achievement' by Crawford, who adds that, despite the cost, 'the housewife strives to provide their family with fried bacon when possible'.²⁴³ According to the surveys, a full-course dinner of soup, fish, meat, vegetables and sweet, in contrast with bread and butter (with or without cheese) or fish and chips, represent the extremes of the social scale.²⁴⁴

The comparative analysis revealed many similarities between the sources, but some significant variations as well. Various reasons can explain these differences. As stated by Prais, regional prices' disparity or the variation due to the quantity and/or quality of the food purchase influence household spending.²⁴⁵ However, another element, the food eaten outside the home, demands to be taken into account when studying eating habits

²⁴³ Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 39–40.

²⁴⁴ Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 39; 74–75; Massey, "The Expenditure of 1,360 British Middle-Class Households" 159–196.

²⁴⁵ Prais and Houthakker, *The Analysis of Family Budgets*, 109–11.

and, as revealed in the Crawford Study, the place of eating was, again, related to social class.

Figure 17: Place of husband's midday meal in % (Crawford)

	D	C	B	A	AA
	< £125	£125-249	£250-499	£500-999	£1000+
In Restaurant	4.7	10.8	25.7	35.8	39.3
At Home	59.5	50.6	61.1	53.9	52.9
Lunch taken from home	26.2	34.8	7.3	-	0.7
No information	9.6	3.8	5.9	10.3	7.1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Crawford, p.55

As can be seen on the table, at least half the midday meals were taken at home. Regrettably, the study does not indicate the impact of these meals on the food budget. Nevertheless, the social influence on food taken out is clearly indicated by the proportion of upper and middle-class eating in restaurants in contrast with the percentage of the working class bringing their lunch from home. Massey, on the other hand, gives the expenses for food eaten outside the home, but without any indication of their frequency. However, similarly to Crawford, a significant difference can be seen between the two extremes of the income scale:

Figure 18: Weekly expenditure on food taken away from home (per head in d)

	£250-350	£350-500	£500-700	£700 +
Meals at school	0.33	0.92	2.18	1.76
Milk at school	0.25	0.29	0.28	0.12
Other foods	0	0.073	0.14	0.12
Midday meal	5.7	6.48	14.46	25.82
Other meals	0.30	3.02	5.19	9.94
Milk	0.16	0.073	0	0.12
Total foods away from home	9.48	10.76	22.26	37.93

Source: Massey, p.183

A demarcation at £500 a year is perceptible regarding meals at school and midday meals eaten out, possibly due to the distance between home and office or the costs of meals in private schools. The other meals eaten out also show a distinct increase parallel to the

social class scale, revealing different habits, such as going out to supper in the highest social group.

The comparative analysis has shown that food habits vary from one class to another and within the sub-divisions of the middle classes studied. Except for some particular commodities, such as margarine, dried milk and fish and chips, a parallel can be made between food expenses, quantity, quality, and social class. The pre-war middle-class diet, which was higher in quantity and quality than the working-class one, included protein-rich food such as meat, bacon, milk, eggs and cheese, but also noticeable expenses on sugar and butter. The purchases of buns, cake, canned fish and sweets are also worth mentioning. Fruit was another item to be taken into account. The kind of food noted in the surveys indicates a noticeable variety of commodities that included imported and industrial products:

Figure 19: Food items mentioned in Massey and Crawford surveys

Bread, Potatoes Flour Buns, Cakes, Pastries Biscuits Proprietary cereals Oatmeal Rice, Sago, Macaroni	Beef, Veal Mutton, Lamb, Pork Meat (preserve) Sausages, Meat pies, Offal Rabbit, Poultry Bacon, Ham Fish (fresh, dried, canned)	Cheese Eggs Milk,, (Fresh, dried, condensed) Cream Custard, Milk pudding Butter Margarine, Lard, Suet
Salad, herbs Tomatoes Vegetables Beans/peas (fresh) Onion, Shallot Vegetables (preserves) Dried legumes	Apples Oranges Bananas Other fresh fruits Fruits (preserve) Fruit tarts / juice Nuts, Dried fruits	Sugar Jam, Marmalade Syrup, Treacle, Honey Jellies Tea, Coffee, Cocoa Sweets, Chocolate, Ice cream Malt, Cold liver oil

(In Crawford Study and almost exclusively for higher classes AA, A: Game, Wine, and Savouries)

Such standards suffered from the wartime restrictions, as shown by the comparison between the rationed commodities and their pre-war quantities given in Crawford Study:

Figure 20: Comparative table Crawford Study and wartime rationing

	Crawford Study		Rations
	£250-499 (B)	£500-999 (A)	
	Oz (grams)	Oz (grams)	Oz (grams)
Meat (beef/mutton/pork)	25.2oz (715)	27.1 (770)	Circa 16.0 (450g)
Bacon and ham	6.1oz (175)	6oz (175)	4oz (113g)
Milk	4.4 pints	5 pints	Between 2 and 3 pints
Butter	10.3oz (290)	11.3oz (322)	2oz (56g)
Margarine	1.4oz (40)	1.5oz (40)	4 oz (113g)
Cheese	3.0oz (86)	3.3oz (95g)	Between 1 and 4oz (28 and 113g)
Eggs	5.5	6.6	1 per week
Sugar	17.2oz (490g)	17.9oz (508g)	8 oz (226g)
Tea	3.3oz (95g)	3.9oz (108g)	2 oz (56g)

Sources: Crawford, 178-275; Hammond, Food, 402-3.

Meat was rationed by price, 1 shilling and 10 pence, equivalent 22d.²⁴⁶ The expenses for meat in Crawford were between 24d and 29d (including sausages and offal), while in Massey between 17d and 20d. According to these figures, the ration was similar to the pre-war expenditures (if not better). However, the quantity of meat given in Crawford differs significantly from the estimated one pound (circa 450g) given by Minns.²⁴⁷ This could be due to misestimating, but more likely results from the wartime increase of prices. The other rationed commodities show noticeable decreases for all commodities except for margarine.

Conclusion

This introductory section has contextualised the various dimensions of this research. In the first section Mass Observation and its materials have been introduced, while the diaries and the Directives replies analysed have been described and their limitations and challenging features ascertained. The mixed methodology, specifically designed to

²⁴⁶ Hammond, *Food*, 402–3; Minns, *Bombers and Mash*, Chronology.

²⁴⁷ Minns, *Bombers and Mash*, Chronology.

respond to such difficulties, has been explained and its benefit regarding the extraction, categorisation and analysis of the data has been demonstrated. In the second section, the historical construction of specific British ways of dealing with food and the wartime food situation have been described. The essentiality of the global and imperial trade on the British diet, habits and tastes and the stress put on these food practices by the drastic reduction of importations have also been established. The last chapter has introduced the British middle classes and offered an ideal type of their food consumption, allowing a better understanding of their pre-war diet, and points of comparison with the wartime rations. It has demonstrated the existence of a rich, varied and nutritionally adequate diet with significant consumption of protein foods along with fat, fruits and vegetables, and revealed the severe constraint put on this diet by the wartime restrictions.

Altogether, this contextualisation allows a better familiarisation with the material used for the research and the factors that influenced the wartime experiences of the respondents or the diarists whose narratives have been studied. This is essential to comprehend the whole research and its results, but also to perceive the arguments of the thesis, especially concerning the social class influence on food habits, preferences and attitudes, a major dimension of the analysis presented in the next chapter.

Chapter II

Primary Sources Analysis

Chapter II: Primary Sources Analysis

Similarly to the first chapter, the second one is divided into two parts. The first one concerns the analysis of the replies to the April 1943 Directive related to the impact of the war on the eating habits of the National Panel, while the second one presents the diarists and their testimonies. These two parts present and discuss the primary sources that are the essence of this thesis, firstly through the analysis of a specific question at a given time, secondly through the examination of long-term narratives. Additionally, other material from Mass Observation as well as secondary literature has been considered, either to support or compare the findings of the principal sources examined. Together, they establish the importance of factors such as social class, time and familial status in the study of eating habits and attitude towards food matters.

Chapter II, Part I: Directive Replies of April 1943

This chapter studies the replies of the National Panel to a directive about the impact of the war on eating habits. It aims to define the main changes noticed by the volunteers in their diet through direct statements about the food they ate or did not eat any more, but also their perception of the wartime food situation.

Unexpected outcomes emerged from the analysis. In contradiction with account of the Home Front found in the Secondary literature, the impression that no significant change of food habits was noticed by the respondents was especially unanticipated, as was the importance of fruit in the replies. Such results demanded to be investigated as well as contextualised. Various elements explain them. Social pressure, for instance, affected the attitude and answers of the respondents. However, social class and time proved to be of great influence too, a finding supporting the arguments that social class and time are

essential factors to consider regarding the impact of the war on the eating habits of the population.

Divided into three sections, this chapter firstly introduces material from surveys preceding the Directive replies of April 1943, in order to determine the situation earlier in the war and to offer some point of comparison with the central research of this chapter. The second part presents the Directive, the respondents, the data and its analysis. The last part discusses the findings in relation to the potential factors of influence involved.

1. The Wartime Food Situation Prior April 1943

Three sets of data have been examined in this section. Firstly, a survey conducted in September 1941 which indicates noticeable food difficulties at the time. Secondly, an analysis of the Directive Reply of February 1942 by Marissa Millhorn, showing a gender variation in attitudes about the food situation and suggesting more difficulties than admitted. Finally, a report made in March 1943 which supports the importance of social pressure on the freedom to express complaints.

September 1941 Survey

Despite tackling a different topic than the Directive of April 1943, the 164 answers to a questionnaire in September 1941 provide information about the existing situation at the time. Unfortunately, the original questionnaire was not found in the archive.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the determination of the first question (Do you have food difficulties?) was made possible through the answers given. The answers have been categorised according to their positive or negative meaning, while significant remarks have been recorded. Their analysis allowed the evaluation of the difficulties faced by the interviewees, and revealed the similarities and divergences with the replies of 1943. As expected, a majority of people interviewed declared that they were facing difficulties regarding food. However, significant geographical variations are noticeable.

²⁴⁸ Part of the material of 1941 is missing, letting researchers with the topic collection to fill the gap.

Figure 21: Comparative table food difficulties September 1941

Locality	Number of Questionnaire	Have presently food difficulties?	
		Yes	No
Euston	20	20	0
Fulham	48	19	28
Camden Town	14	5	8
Leyton	31	22	9
Neasden	22	17	4
Cricklewood	29	12	17
Total	164	95	66

As can be seen on the table, people from Euston, Leyton and Neasden expressed noteworthy difficulties, while those from Fulham did not (like, to some extent, those from Camden Town). Such variations could result from recurrent or temporary problems of distribution as well as different personal priorities, but there are indications which could explain them in the sources.

The lack of specific information about the difficulties faced by the interviewees is another limitation of the replies. Nevertheless, according to the comments available, meat and eggs were a main issue (respectively fifteen and ten mentions). Fruits, cereals, jam, price and food scarcity were also mentioned. Even if not numerically significant, remarks about the consequences of the lack of marmalade (eating jam despite not liking it or having only bread and margarine for breakfast) are of interest. On the one hand they offer information regarding the pre-war importance of the commodity. On the other hand they reveal the potential persistence of a habit despite the circumstances and the dislike.²⁴⁹

The notion of fairness is observable in the replies, suggesting pre-war difficulties and a positive outcome of rationing: 'We all have to take our share', wrote one participant, while another one noted, 'We can all get something now'. Conversely, the restriction of choice is also commented on: 'We're not starving only we can't get what we like', wrote a

²⁴⁹ MOA TC 1/2/67/3A, Questionnaire 1; 40.

contributor, echoing similar comments. The consequences of the food restriction and shortages is perceptible in observations made about not knowing what to have for dinner, having nothing to put in sandwiches, eating meat only on the weekend, or having bread and margarine alone instead of eggs.²⁵⁰

The number of grievances expressed suggests more difficulties than openly admitted. Indeed, these complaints are often nuanced by comments about the inevitability of the situation and the fact that people 'mustn't grumble about food' especially given the worse situation of others. Such commentaries confirm the weight of social pressure on the freedom to criticise food management by the Government. In addition, the gender of the interviewees seems to affect the expression of their dissatisfaction as well, according to the study of the Directive Replies of February 1942.

February 1942 Directive and March 1943 Survey

Marissa Millhorn, in her examination of the attitude of women to the food situation from the February 1942 Directive, demonstrates a feminine tendency to express satisfaction and to complain indirectly. For instance, they would disguise resentment through complaints about others escaping the wartime sacrifice. Women also stressed the favourable British food situation in comparison with other European countries. In contrast, men not only discussed issues with rationing, but emphasised the discontent of housewives with the situation.²⁵¹ The fact that their difficulties were described by the male respondents reveals a reality more demanding than the female respondents admitted publicly, indicating a gendered circumspection. Their perspective could be related to the situation in other countries but, according to Millhorn, it can also result from the impression to participate in the war effort by turning a blind eye on the inconveniences of rationing and expressing satisfaction and optimism instead.²⁵² Doing so,

²⁵⁰ MOA TC 1/2/67/3A, Questionnaires 40; 50; 76; 90; 95; 96; 125; 110; 89; 128.

²⁵¹ Millhorn, Marissa. "Britain's Kitchen Front: British Perceptions of the Food Situation and Women's Attitudes during the Second World War (February 1942) (Senior Project, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, 2013)." pg #, in DigitalCommons@CalPoly, 2013, 34.

²⁵² Millhorn, "Britain's Kitchen Front", 35–6.

these women would do their duty and preserve the morale of the home front. Nonetheless, their attitude can be understood as an example of the control of freedom of speech by social pressure, as complaining was considered as a form of defeatism. The same social pressure was perceptible in another survey conducted in March 1943. The report indicates that the interviewees were less likely to admit general food difficulties than the feeling of not getting enough of specific commodities.²⁵³ From the MO point of view, this divergence was due to the social pressure to avoid grumbling and to express that, all considered, the country was doing well.²⁵⁴

These three studies reveal food difficulties and a need to adapt to the restrictions by modifying diet and eating habits, offering points of comparison with the analysis of the replies to the Directive of April 1943. They also reveal the influence of social class regarding the food preferences and priorities of the interviewees, reinforcing the argument concerning the importance of cultural factors in eating habits defended in this thesis.

2. The Research

Directive and Respondents

On April 1943, the monthly Directive sent to the National Panel included a specific question regarding food:

What do you consider the main changes the war has brought about in your eating habits, and to what extent, if at all, do you think your tastes have changed. In answering this question, please deal with changes (if any) in the place you eat, the speed at you eat etc. etc. as well as with changes in the sort of food you eat.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ 31% of men and 49% of women stated having food difficulties, 17% men and 2% women mentioning meat, fish: 6% men and 27% women, and fruits: 3% men and 12% women, then butter, milk and sugar. Regarding feeling not getting enough, the answers were notably more significant with 46% men and 17% women mentioning meat, eggs: 23% men and 24% women and fruits: 24% men and 23% women.

²⁵⁴ MOA FR 1629 Health, March 1943, 8.

²⁵⁵ MOA, Directive Reply of April 1943, Priority B, Question 5

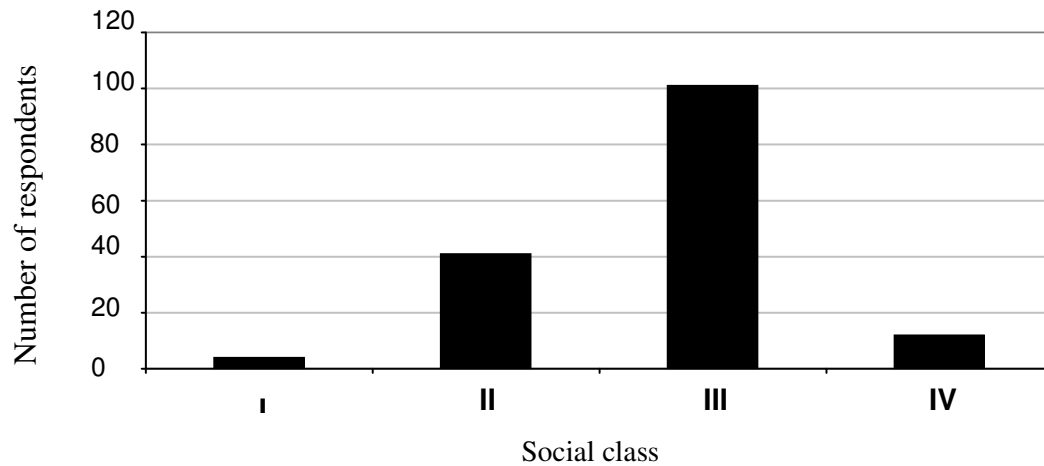
322 participants received the questionnaire and 248 respondents answered this question. Little information is available regarding these 248 respondents. When provided, information about their sex, date of birth, marital status and occupation were the only elements available to define some demographic and social indicators (see appendix 8). The sex ratio was balanced with 132 women and 114 men (2 unknown) of various ages. The determination of social class was made difficult because criteria such as income, education, housing or standard of living were not provided. In addition, some of the respondents defined themselves as housewives and students, preventing any categorisation. However, it seems unlikely that these uncategorised respondents would exceedingly differ from the rest of the National Panel. Nonetheless, this limitation exists and must be remembered.

Another point to take into account is that during the war people who would not have worked otherwise (women, for instance) could have been employed, and those already working could have found a better job. This situation could induce a change of income or class by occupation not representative of the primary cultural background. For all these reasons, the social class categorisation must be understood as indicative and possibly problematic.

Taking such limitations into consideration, according to the information available in the sources mostly all the respondents were from the middle/lower-middle classes and predominantly of class III (sub-division C, clerical work).²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Armstrong, "The Use of Information about Occupation", 205.

Figure 22: Distribution social class by occupation



This predominance reflects the composition of the National Panel discussed by Fiona Courage and James Hinton.²⁵⁷ It also had an influence on the habits of the respondents, as demonstrated in the replies analysis.

The Replies and their Analysis

Naturally, such a limited number of testimonies cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, their analysis provides a temporal snapshot of the situation of this group of people, revealing some unexpected results. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Angus Calder, authors of *Austerity in Britain* and the *People's War* both maintain that variety and quality of food degraded during the war, with complaint about the meat ration and generally the quantity allowed.²⁵⁸ In contrast, rationed commodities, for instance, were not mentioned significantly by the respondents and references about non-rationed food such as sausages or offal were even less numerous.²⁵⁹ Also unanticipated, fruit and not meat proved to be a key part of the replies with 133 related mentions, while the impression given by the general analysis was an apparent lack of major changes in the eating habits of the respondents.

²⁵⁷ Hinton, *The Mass Observers*, 62; Courage, "The National Panel".

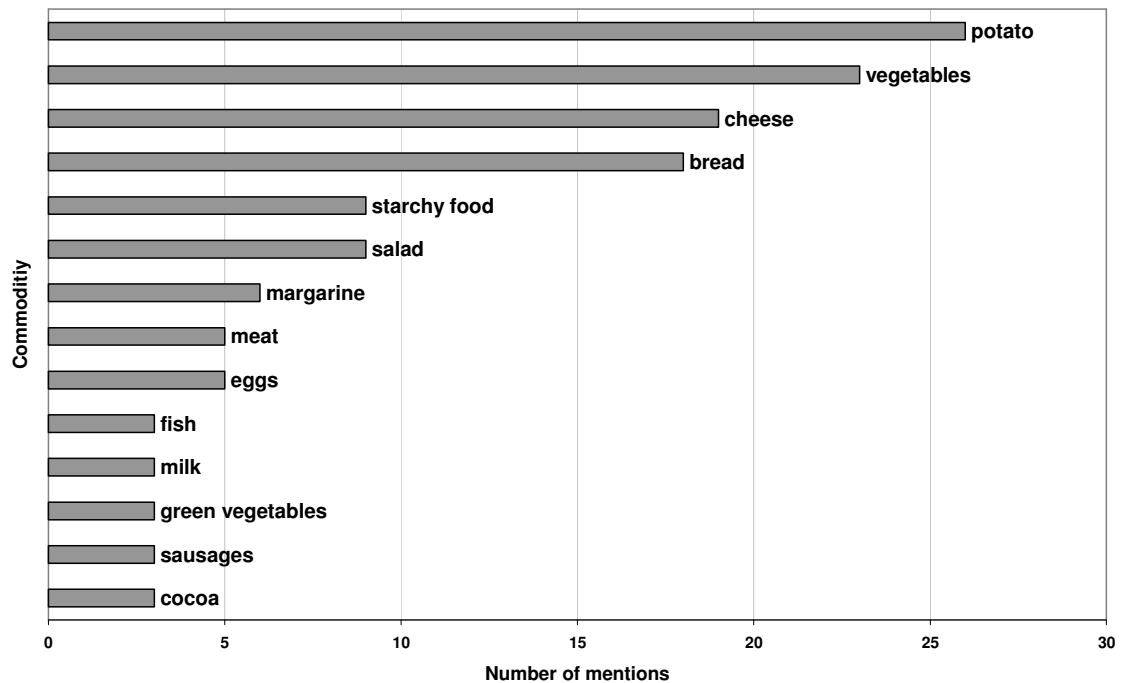
²⁵⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 36–37, 74–75; Calder, *The Peoples War*, 239, 381–83.

²⁵⁹ Meat: 85 mentions, eggs: 69 mentions, butter: 61 mentions, sausages: 15 mentions, offal: 2 mentions.

General Analysis

The three following tables represent the analysis of the data related to food consumption. The first one concerns the categories 'eat more of', the second one the category 'eat less of' and the final one the category 'missed food'. As visible on figure 23 below, the main commodities named are potatoes, vegetables and bread.

Figure 23: "Eat more of" (85/248 respondents)



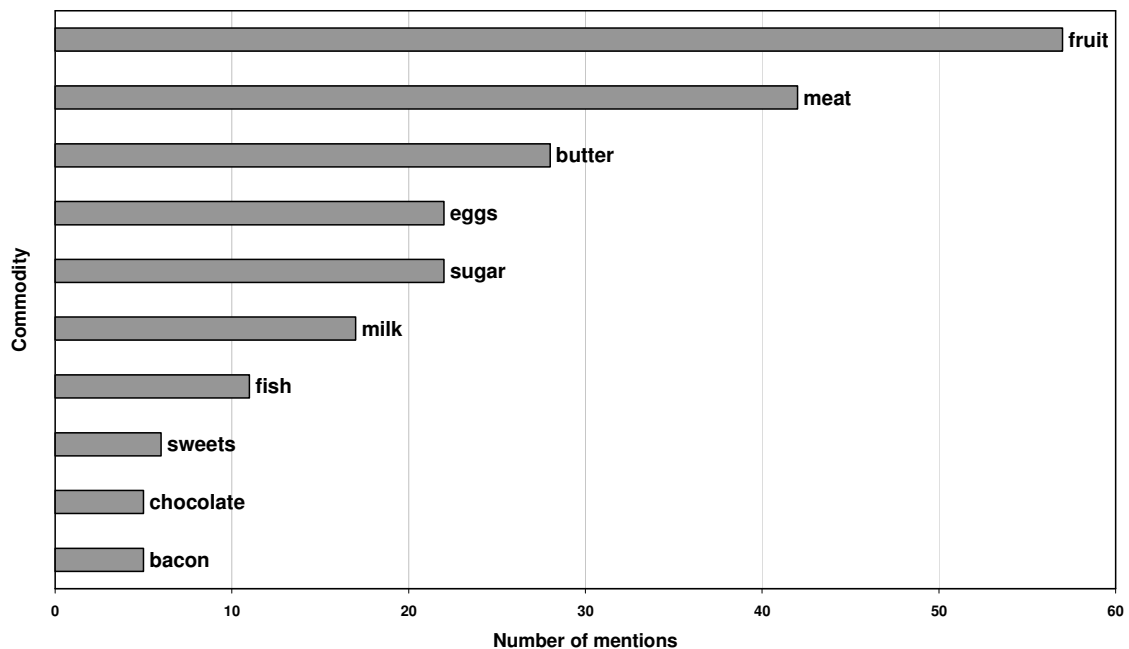
These results were expected. In contrast, the increase of the consumption of cheese despite rationing, the small number of mentions regarding the consumption of margarine as well as the increase of meat and eggs given by some respondents were not.

These results firstly suggest a possible change of habits or a pragmatic adaptation, with the use of cheese as replacement for meat or to flavour the vegetables as indicated by some respondents. Secondly, concerning margarine, the data suggest that a significant number of respondents were already using margarine prior to the war (a point discussed

later). Thirdly, the result could signify that the rationing and price control allowed at least four respondents to get more meat and eggs than before (the fifth respondent was vegetarian prior to the war, thus the increase of meat consumption was related to a change of diet).

The increase of meat consumption was marginal though, as demonstrated by the second heading analysed, 'eat less of':

Figure 24: "Eat less of" (113/248 respondents)



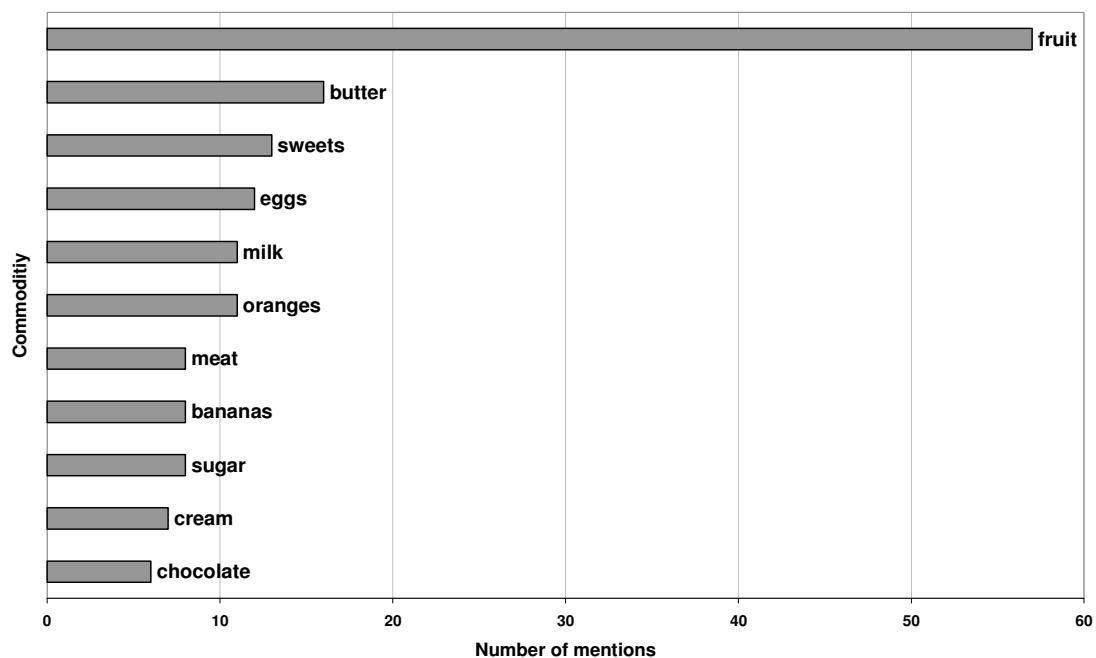
As can be seen on figure 24, the decrease of meat consumption, like other rationed commodities, was noticed by the respondents, although less significantly than expected, especially regarding eggs, butter, and sugar, the consumption of which had been drastically cut by rationing.²⁶⁰ In addition, while only 113 of the respondents specifically mentioned eating less of one commodity or another, half of them mentioned fruit. This

²⁶⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 36–7.

was another surprising result, because it was not expected that fruit would be mentioned more importantly than rationed protein-rich food, meat and bacon in particular.

This is not to say that the shortage of fruit and its consequence on the population has not been discussed in the secondary literature. On the contrary, the shortage of fruit, especially exotic ones, is given as an example of the wartime food deprivation. However, if mentioned, fruit is presented rather incidentally by authors focusing on rationed food.²⁶¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska included fruit more extensively in her analysis of the wartime food situation. Nonetheless, even if she offers statistics about its consumption and mentions the discontentment about its shortage, fruit is just an example amongst others. Nothing in her analysis or the other works examined suggests that fruit was an important part of the British diet. Thus the results of the third analysis, ‘missed food’, were even more unexpected:

Figure 25: “Missed food” (92/248 respondents)



²⁶¹ Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 146; Marwick, *The Home Front*, 85; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 147.

The result given in figure 25 reveals the outstanding importance of fruit in the commodities missed by the respondents (with significant specific mentions about oranges and bananas). It is also noticeable in the analysis that the rationed foods mentioned as 'less eaten' are not necessarily the most missed. Sweets, for example, got more mentions than vital protein foods, an interesting result as it indicates that food priorities in time of scarcity can relate to preferences, pleasure and comfort as well as the question of nutrition (as confirmed by the importance of marmalade in the survey of 1941).

The importance given to fruit was absolutely unanticipated, calling into question the wartime food priorities usually found in the literature. As previously stated, a focus on protein-rich food, especially meat, was expected, in accordance with the secondary literature. This importance given to meat probably results from the focus of many authors on rationed food and the working class rather than the middle class. From that perspective, it is comprehensible that meat would have represented a significant issue that deserved most of the attention. On the one hand, the working class had less means to compensate the rationing. On the other hand, hard workers relied more on meat, bacon and cheese for protein intake. The resentment expressed by workers regarding the unfairness of distribution (either due to the better off eating out or clerical workers receiving the same amount of food while having a less demanding job) is very present in the contemporary source and reflected in the secondary ones.²⁶² However, the middle class pre-war eating habits, discussed in Part I, show a significant daily consumption of animal protein, meat, bacon and ham in particular, but also cheese and eggs. It is surprising that no significant comments would be made in 1943, as they were in 1941, considering a limitation of the weekly ration. This difference of importance between 1941 and 1943 could be the result of a better management of the distribution or the fact that the ration met the need of the respondents. This last point seems improbable though, as the meat ration did not increase (it decreased drastically between 1940 and 1941, then stabilised).²⁶³

²⁶² See for instance the survey of February 1943 presented by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 76.

²⁶³ Hammond, *Food*, 402.

According to the results and their analyses, the headings, “eat less of” and “missed foods” can be said to be representative of two different perspectives, the “facts” and the “feelings”. Both are essential as the perception of the changes in their diet by the respondents is as significant as the changes themselves. The importance of sweets, for instance, reveals the significance of commodities nutritionally inadequate, but still important in the eyes (and probably morale) of the respondents. The variation of food concerns also suggests that, while time could be a factor of adaptation, the long-term food restriction could also augment the desire for comforting commodities or to get a taste of their pre-war pleasure, an important dimension of food choices. The place taken by fruit and sweets in comparison with meat, eggs or milk suggests that after three years of food restrictions and shortage, the respondents adjusted their habits by replacing one commodity with another, which they got used to (fresh meat by canned meat and butter by margarine, for instance) or found ways to obtain more of such commodities (black market, eating out, keeping hens). However, they did not find fruit substitutes as most were imported.

The significance of exotic fruits in the diet of the population is validated by investigations made about food and shopping by Mass Observation in November 1938 and during the summer of 1939. The surveys demonstrate that imported commodities were a major part of the shopping basket.²⁶⁴ In addition to exotic products such as tea, coffee, cocoa, or sugar, fruit, oranges in particular, were a main purchase, only about ten interviewees did not buy oranges that week (on fifty-seven questionnaires).²⁶⁵

The impact of the reduction of imported commodities must have been noticed, as commodities unusual prior to the war were expected to be mentioned as a change in eating habits. Dried eggs, for example, should have been described as new food. As regards other novelties, it was expected that the tastes of the respondents would have

²⁶⁴ MOA TC WorktownCollection Box 31 Christmas and January Sales.

²⁶⁵ MOA TC WorktownCollection Box 32 Food and Shopping.

been modified by four years of wartime diet and that British Restaurants or canteens would have become a new place to eat. The analysis of the replies tells a different story, however. The main 'new' commodity mentioned is margarine, and still, only fourteen times in 248 answers. Dried eggs are indicated eleven times and American tinned food only half a dozen. This is surprising as margarine was a well-known product at the time while dried eggs were not. Regarding taste, only twenty respondents discussed it, usually writing they'd got used to a single commodity (unsweetened tea was mentioned by five respondents and margarine by three, while cabbage, or salad, were noted once only).²⁶⁶ Concerning the place of eating, wartime work or the creation of canteens could have modified pre-war habits. Unfortunately the information available is insufficient or irrelevant to compare the pre-war period and April 1943, with references such as 'the same place of eating than usual', without any further information about the place and its pre-war existence or whether it was a new wartime habit.²⁶⁷

As regards to communal feeding, despite being non-existent before the war, but quite well implemented in 1943, British Restaurants are mentioned only seven times. From occasional to weekly use, they replaced cafés or were used to save rations at home.²⁶⁸ The judgements of the meals offered go from 'similar to one cooks oneself' to 'dogs dinner (sic)'.²⁶⁹ Canteens, on the other hand, are mentioned six times, from occasional attendance to five days a week, and were said to be used instead of eating out.²⁷⁰ The choice of small restaurants or tiny cafés in preference to larger ones is perceptible in the replies.²⁷¹ Some respondents who used to eat at work (school, canteen or office) are now eating at home, but no explanation for such change is given.²⁷² However, a variation of frequency of eating out or at home is not significant. Home is the place most mentioned,

²⁶⁶ MOA DR 2916; MOA DR 2925; MOA DR 2751, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁶⁷ 27 mentions concerning the pre-war place of eating and 97 mentions for 1943

²⁶⁸ MOA DR 3335; MOA DR 2090; MOA DR 1478; MOA DR 2930, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁶⁹ MOA DR 1669; MOA DR 2905, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷⁰ MOA DR 3351; MOA DR 2656; MOA DR 2165; MOA DR 2512; MOA DR 3306; MOA DR 3416, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷¹ MOA DR 3416; MOA DR 3439, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷² MOA DR 2486; MOA DR 2675, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

but in many cases other places (restaurants, cafés and so on) are also noted.²⁷³ A slight move from commercial catering to communal feeding and home is noticeable. The reason given for the choice of the place to eat varies greatly, according to individual motivations. The quality of food and family duties are given, but economic factors have their importance as indicated by comments about preferring to pay more to eat in a café than in a self-service restaurant, or to not eat out at all for financial reasons.²⁷⁴ Even if not numerous, the comments on eating out, for instance, reveal motivations from saving rations to a search for better food.

This qualitative data, categorised under the heading 'personal remarks', is crucial to understanding the sense of the quantitative analysis as it informs on the respondents' perspectives and priorities. The personal remarks offer information about the life of the respondents, their habits and their perception of the food situation. For instance, ten respondents mentioned keeping hens, indicating a source of eggs that could ease the rationing. Nine respondents stated being vegetarians and consequently received an increased ration of cheese (12 ounces) in replacement of the meat and bacon rations. This would be a potential factor of influence on their perspective as they presumably did not face the same changes in eating habits as those used to having a cooked breakfast and the traditional meat and two vegetables meals on a regular basis.²⁷⁵ However, the comments were predominantly related to the individual food situation, the wartime eating habits and the opinion of the respondents.

According to their testimonies, the main impact of the wartime food situation was to make them 'less faddy about food' as expressed by a quarter of them in one way or another. It does mean that the wartime diet was not appreciated, as demonstrated by a dozen of remarks going from a polite 'I dislike potatoes', to a strong 'I hate margarine', or

²⁷³ 31 mentions

²⁷⁴ MOA DR 2829; MOA DR 3413; MOA DR 3446; MOA DR 3308; MOA DR 2842; MOA DR 2844, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷⁵ Alcock, Joan P. "Food in Time of War." In *Food and Morality: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2007*, Friedland Susan ed., Blackawton: Prospect, 2008, 15.

this so expressive 'I will never eat a sausage again'.²⁷⁶ Worries about the consequences of the lack of butter, eggs, fruits and vegetables on health were also expressed. A respondent stated having been found undernourished by her doctor, for instance.²⁷⁷ Feeling hungry or being hungry is also mentioned half a dozen times, while statements about eating 'what one can get' or 'anything available' are significant, illustrating the difference between pre-war eating habits and the diet of 1943.

The 1943 Diet

Less than sixty respondents wrote about their pre-war meals and/or their meals in 1943. According to the third of them who mentioned it, breakfast seemed especially important. The degradation of the meals is visible in comments such as: 'before: large breakfast, now: light breakfast'²⁷⁸ or 'before: fruits, toast and coffee, now: anything available. The same respondent expressing that she 'can eat anything, anytime, anywhere', revealing the wartime food difficulties she met and the extent of their impact on her food practices.²⁷⁹ Tea is another meal regularly mentioned, sometimes with humour: 'before: afternoon tea, now: no more afternoon tea'.²⁸⁰

The respondents do not give the impression of unbearable degradation in their diet, but changes occurred. The modifications of eating habits are revealed through comments about eating margarine and peanut butter instead of butter and jam, or about potatoes and cheese replacing eggs, bacon, kippers, fruits and tomatoes, as well as comments about eating sandwiches, cheese dishes, pork pies or sausages and mash instead of meat, bacon, fish or game. All considered, a degradation of variety and quality of food is perceptible, as well as a move from a middle-class diet (protein-rich food, butter, game and fruit) to a more working-class diet (protein substitutes such as meat pies or sandwiches, margarine and a limited amount of fruit). Little tangible information was

²⁷⁶ MOA DR 2905; MOA DR 3113; MOA DR 3305, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷⁷ MOA DR 3113, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷⁸ MOA DR 3397, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁷⁹ MOA DR 2906, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

²⁸⁰ MOA DR 3379, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

given about a change of diet though, as most of the respondents described, usually very succinctly, their wartime diet without providing a pre-war example, preventing any comparison. Only two respondents gave an extended account of their pre-war and wartime meals that allow access to the consequences of the war on their diet (further example appendix 9):

Figure 26: Pre-war and 1943 comparative meals

Resp.	Meals before the war	Meals in 1943
2274, F, 47	Breakfast: coffee + nuts + raisin + apples or orange or grapefruit, no bread, no cereal. Lunch (summer): salad + salad cream + butter + cheese or fish or eggs. Tea (office): tea + 2 biscuits. Supper: vegetables + meat dishes (meat 3x/week, liver 1x/week) + light sweet (jelly, baked custard).	Breakfast: coffee + puffed wheat + milk + golden syrup + apple (when lucky). Mid-morning: oxo + canteen cheese sandwich. Lunch: meat + vegetables (while meat rations last, then only vegetables), no fish, no unrationed meat stuff, no bread, potatoes, stewed apples or rhubarb when gettable. Tea (office): tea + canteen buns. Supper (became high tea): tea + toast "something" savoury + jam + butter (while ration last), no margarine. Night: cocoa + anything available
2675, F, 51	Breakfast: bread + butter + jam + meat paste + honey + stewed fruits. Dinner: rissole (meat and vegetarian), vegetarian dishes, biscuits + cheese, stodgy pudding + ice cream or chocolate. Tea (office): tea + cake Tea (home): bread + butter + cake. Supper: biscuits + cheese + milk pudding + fruit. Very little green vegetable or salad	Breakfast: cereal + bacon + egg + toast + butter + marmalade. Dinner: meat or fish + green vegetables + sweet (fruit tart or pudding). Tea (office): tea + cake + snack (bread + butter + jam or cheese). High tea (billet): grill or fish salad + cake.

The descriptions presented in figure 26 indicate a decrease of protein-rich food and fruit (especially respondent number 2274), an increase of starchy commodities and a noticeable reduction of variety. It also shows the constraint of personal taste (no margarine, no 'meat stuff') as well as how much plainer the meals have become. Nonetheless, while these two respondents echo the comments of others on the decrease or shortage of fruits, meat, butter and 'fancy food' consumption, it is evident from their accounts that, in one way or another, they managed rather well despite the difficulties,

another factor of influence regarding the analysis of the impact of the war on eating habits.

Particular Analysis

While the general analysis revealed the importance of fruit, for instance, it also gave the impression that, all considered, the war did not affect significantly the respondents' food consumption. Such an impression is at the same time confirmed and challenged by the quantitative analysis. Regarding the alteration of eating habits, for instance, 115 respondents specifically commented upon wartime changes in their diet. Fifty-two indicated the extent of such change, while nineteen wrote about a variation of the quantity of food eaten. The remaining forty-four commented mainly on a degradation of quality (plainer, less variety, altered taste, monotonous, unappetizing) or specified the reason for a modification of their eating habits (rationing, being in the Army, or getting married).

As shown in the table below, specific comments about changes in diet are surprisingly few:

Figure 27: Changes in diet

Little change	22	Eat less	13
Very little change	15	Eat more	3
None	15	Eat much less	3

Indeed, it was assumed that, after years of rationing, a majority of respondents would have mentioned modifications of their habits. The fact that those who explicitly qualified these modifications predominantly reported little change if any, required further investigation, especially concerning the possible factors involved in the perception of change, that is sex and marital status.

Figure 28: Changes in diet according to gender

Changes in diet	Male	Female
Little	13	9
Very little	5	10
None	13	2
Eat less	4	9
Eat much less	0	3
Feeling hungry	2	4

Figure 28 shows that men perceived fewer changes in their diet than women, and that women expressed more decrease in their food intake than men. This gender difference could have resulted from the marital status of the respondents, as wives could have deprived themselves for the benefit of the other members of the family, supporting the standard view of the gender division of food.²⁸¹ However, the examination of the data does not indicate any significant difference between married and single respondents, thus such an explanation cannot be demonstrated. Moreover, various other reasons can explain this gender difference. These respondents could be used to eating out and so be less affected by rationing, for instance. Naturally, it is possible that an unequal gender sharing of food occurred in the privacy of the household, although nothing in the replies corroborates such an assertion. In any case, the number of respondents is too limited to support or challenge any social theories.

The main point to consider regarding these results is that actually very few respondents mentioned a significant change in their diet and that gender does not seem to be a key factor regarding these changes. Conversely, the social class of the respondents proved to be of influence on their eating habits as well as their perspectives.

In order to compare the data by social group, the number of respondents by sub-class was established, and then the number of respondents by class, heading or food item was defined. Finally, the relation between the number of answers and the number of

²⁸¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 127–8, 149.

respondents by class was ascertained, revealing the more perceptible tendencies (see appendix 10). For example, the heading 'new food' was mentioned by forty-three respondents. One was from class I, six from class II, twenty-two from class III and three from class IV (the social class of eleven respondents was unknown). Fourteen people (about half from class II and one third from class III) wrote that margarine was a new commodity in their habit. According to these results it can be said that, concerning this group of people, margarine was more often a novelty in class II than in class III.

Concerning the quantity of food eaten, the decrease in meat, sugar and egg consumption and the increase of starchy foods in the diet are similarly mentioned by all classes. The decrease of fruit consumption is more significant for class II than for class III, while the consumption of vegetables increased slightly in class III, supporting Crawford's finding that higher classes ate more fruits and vegetables than lower classes. Concerning fat, while margarine did not show a significant social difference, the decrease of butter consumption is more important for class III.²⁸² However, the main significant outcome relates to the consumption of "protein substitute" such as sausages, pie, pastry, fish and chips and so on: 5/18 in class II noted an increase in consumption, while only 3/33 from class III did, a figure that suggests that such commodities were more common in the lower middle class than the middle-middle one.

This finding, along with the rest of the analysis, shows a tendency to a social levelling down of the diet. As demonstrated in Part I, the consumption of meat, eggs, milk, butter and sugar as well as vegetables and fruits was significant in middle-class households prior to the war. It is assumed that many respondents replaced their pre-war ingredients by those then available, including commodities usually eaten by the lower classes. Interestingly, a comparison of the level of dissatisfaction about food in the replies reveals that 6/41 respondents from class II complained, while only 7/101 respondent from class III

²⁸² A significant difference, however, no quantity is given, making impossible to know if it was linked with eating habits, the rationing or to financial reasons (either the increase of price or the means to buy it illegally).

did. Without any generality, this comparison suggests a greater resentment and feeling of degradation within the higher middle-class group. Nonetheless, all considered, very few complaints were made in the replies, a possible illustration of the influence of social pressure on the freedom of speech.

3. Factors of influence

The section presented above offers a valuable insight into the impact of the war on the food practices and perspectives of 248 respondents. Nevertheless, the numerous comments about fruit, the very few comments about new food, communal feeding or even the quasi non-existent complaints, as well as the absence of significant gender difference, were all unanticipated. However, the most surprising observation was the impression that there were not so many serious changes in the eating habits of the respondents. Fifty-two respondents reported few or no changes, while only three mentioned important ones. Surely, as the MO Directive asked precisely for consideration of the 'main change' due to the war in the diet, it could be that no change was considered significant for a majority of the respondents. However, this is unlikely. The National Food Survey of 1953 about household food expenditures and consumption during the war revealed a marked decrease of food consumption in the middle-class families which participated.²⁸³ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska also demonstrated that the diet of the middle class suffered a significant decrease in calories and protein intake.²⁸⁴ Even if taking into account only the restrictions due to rationing, the comparison between the middle classes' pre-war food consumption studied by Crawford and the rations had shown a drastic decrease of the quantity of butter, eggs, sugar and tea. It seems improbable that the respondents did not feel such a difference in their daily lives. In consequence, the question is more about the extent and perception of the changes than about their very existence.

²⁸³ MAF 300/4 FNS 53.1, 11–12; MAF 300/4 FNS 53.2.

²⁸⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 40, 45.

Various factors can explain, at least partially, the replies given by the respondents about their wartime diet. The pre-war habits of the respondents are an important element to be taken into account. Depending on the kind of food they used to have prior to the war, the rationing and shortages would be differently perceived. However, a major factor would be time. In three years the respondents got used to the modifications of their diet. In addition, the food situation evolved between 1939 and 1943, as did the war situation and its inherent worries, influencing priorities.

Time as a factor of adaptation

The importance of time in the perception of the food situation is demonstrated by the reports about the war worries and discontentment made by Mass Observation. While a focus on butter and meat is present in February and April 1940, the main complaints recorded in the diaries in November were about eggs, lemons, onions and leeks.²⁸⁵ In April 1941 the most important source of tension were cheese, meat, sweets and cooking fat. In addition, the management of rationed food was a source of complaints, while unrationed food was perceived as subject to privilege and favouritism.²⁸⁶ Inefficiency of distribution and queuing were also sources of dissatisfaction in June.²⁸⁷ However, according to the surveys made in July 1941, the level of grievance decreased rapidly. In just three weeks the attitude went from a real anger about the food situation and with Lord Woolton, to few complaints, essentially on scarcity, quality, and price of some commodities (fruit in particular).²⁸⁸ Mass Observation founder Tom Harrisson explained this phenomenon by adjustment to the situation, a better awareness of the situation, a feeling of fairness of distribution as well as goodwill towards Lord Woolton and the Ministry of Food. Clearly, the dissatisfaction has been greatly reduced by rationing and the points system and in 1942 the complaints were predominantly about unrationed food.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Weekly Intelligence Service, 13 February 1940, 5–8; Weekly Intelligence Service, 12 April 1940, 97–100; MOA FR 510, 7.

²⁸⁶ MOA FR 632, April 1941.

²⁸⁷ MOA FR 729 June 1941; MOA FR 783, June 1941.

²⁸⁸ MOA FR 783, 14 July 1941; MOA FR 802, 27 July 1941, 3–5.

²⁸⁹ MOA FR 1224, April 1942, 1–3.

This progression of priorities is also perceptible in the annual reports about food tensions. While in spring of 1941 the focus was on cheese, meat, eggs, in spring of 1942 it has moved to cakes, fruits and vegetables. Such evolution suggests the adaptation to the restrictions and/or a better management of the system of distribution for rationed commodities, but also reflects the consequences of the decrease of imported product (fruit in particular) and the demand for convenient, sweet and comforting products (maybe as a way to save rations).²⁹⁰ The frustration at not getting desired commodities was a source of discontentment; nevertheless, according to the report of 1943, people did not worry or complain excessively about food.²⁹¹ This last report suggests that the situation has evolved positively, supporting the statement of Lord Woolton that the system of food distribution was functioning reasonably well by 1943.²⁹²

Additional reports comparing the importance of wartime inconveniences made by Mass Observation between 1939 and 1944 also show an evolution of the perception of the food situation. As can be seen on the table below, while food was a major issue between 1940 and 1942, its level of inconvenience decreased from 1942-43.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ MOA FR 1155 Food Tensions March 1942.

²⁹¹ MOA FR 1155 Food Tensions March 1942; MOA FR 1594, February 1943, 1-2.

²⁹² Marquis, *The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton.*, 208.

²⁹³ MOA FR 2068, March 1968, p.1.

Figure 29: Food situation as inconvenience of war according to year

Place of importance	1939-1940	1940-1941	1941-1942	1942-1943	1943-1944
Blackout	1	1	1	2	1
Transport	2	3	3	1	2
Prices	3	4	8	10	8
Food	5	2	2	3	4
Air Raids	-	5	13	19	16
Supply, shortage	-	6	4	4	3
Separation from friends	-	8	5	5	6
Shopping (queues, crowds etc...)	-	-	7	6	7
Clothes rationing	-	-	-	10	5
Housing shortage	-	-	-	15	8

The evolution from anger and dissatisfaction to an adaptation to the situation is quite understandable. The feeling of a better and fairer distribution, the points system, the relief to see that the situation was not as bad as expected and the need for comfort food in stressful time are all factors to be taken into account. In addition, the food situation was not the sole factor of influence. The war itself must be considered as the situation overseas affected the perspective and priorities of the civilians. From that perspective, 1943 can be seen as a moment 'between war fears and war exhaustion', to quote Robert Mackay.²⁹⁴ Between mid-1942 and April 1943, great military successes and a justifiable belief that the war could be won eased greatly the morale of the home front.²⁹⁵ Besides, the population was not as exhausted as it would be in 1944 when the war seemed endless and the people felt depressed.

The potential victory was also a reason to focus on the future rather than the past. The reconstruction and social reform plans were an important topic as demonstrated by the success of the Beveridge Report, published in November 1942. Far from the fear of invasion or the bombing of 1941 and without any knowledge of what was to be endured

²⁹⁴ Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 91–97; 105.

²⁹⁵ The victory of the Battle of the Atlantic, El Alamein, Stalingrad, the Battle of Midway and Guadalcanal to mention the main ones

in the coming years, the good morale of April 1943 had an impact on the attitude of the respondents. The conditions of living in Britain were better than expected, and much better than those in many other countries, preventing the expression of dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, time alone cannot explain the unexpected replies of the respondents. The pre-war diet, related to social class eating habits, is another major dimension to be taken into account.

Social Class as a Factor of Influence

As stated by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, while the rationing could have been beneficial for the poorest part of the population, those used to imported commodities, a greater variety of ingredients and whose diet was richer in protein food and fruit were significantly affected by the wartime food restrictions.²⁹⁶ Indeed, as reported by the National Food Survey: 'The level of the middle-class household diet, whether considered in term of variety or of nutrient intake, had suffered some marked reduction'.²⁹⁷ Concerning fruit, a significant diminution of expenditure by the upper social groups was reported, echoing the numerous grievances about it expressed in the replies. Regarding margarine, the main novelty reported by the respondents, the survey does not provide quantitative data. Nonetheless, it specifies that while the consumption of margarine increased for all social groups during the war, the consumption of butter had decreased by 80% for the upper group in 1944. On account that, prior to the war, lower classes consumed larger quantities of margarine than the higher ones who used to consume more butter, it is reasonable to argue that the upper and middle classes were forced to modify their consumption of fat to a greater extent than the working class.²⁹⁸ Referring to the decrease of butter consumption in class III found in the replies, it can also be argued that this modification was even greater for the lower-middle class, whose limited financial means made it difficult to cope with the wartime price increase while preventing expensive illegal purchases.

²⁹⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 71.

²⁹⁷ MAF 300/4 FNS 53.1, 1.

²⁹⁸ MAF 300/4 FNS 53.1, 12, 14; Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 225–6.

All these sources are evidence of the importance of social class on eating habits and perspectives about food. Undeniably, the British pre-war consumption of fruits and margarine was related to class.²⁹⁹ According to Crawford and Broadley, the expenditure on fresh fruit was nine times more important for the higher class than the lowest one, reflecting a major difference in consumption.³⁰⁰ Regarding margarine, not only was it primarily purchased by lower classes, but its use also differed. For instance, margarine was exclusively consumed by the two lowest classes at breakfast, midday break and tea.³⁰¹

It is not to say that fruits and margarine were the only commodities whose consumption was related to class. The social difference between eating habits have been demonstrated by Crawford and Broadley, as well as Massey. However, margarine is peculiar, as it carried significant social connotations in Britain at the time. It was used by the lower classes, the poor. The product has suffered from that prejudice since its creation in the 1860s. Because it was sold at a lower price than butter, it was immediately classified as ‘the poor man’s butter’ and kept this image despite marketing efforts.³⁰²

A pilot survey on social responses to margarine made in 1938 by Mass Observation showed that margarine was not only turned down because of its taste, but mainly because of social class prejudices. Fifty-four people in the sixty-two interviewed stated a refusal to eat it because of its association with poverty or poorer class. The same number of people said they would have ‘total hesitation in offering it to friends in reason of what they would think’.³⁰³ The interviewees made their opinion very clear: ‘I should never offer

²⁹⁹ Crawford and Broadley, *The People’s Food*, 39, 61, 226.

³⁰⁰ AA:15.3d, A: 12.9d, B:9.9d, C: 3.9d, D: 1.7d Crawford and Broadley, *The People’s Food*, 257.

³⁰¹ It is interesting to see that the class AA spend slightly more on margarine than classes A and B, but the same as class C and less than class D (0.9d, 0.7d, and 0.6d, 0.9d and 1.4d respectively). The quantity however, indicates a difference of quality (1.8 oz purchased by class AA for 2.4 oz in class C). This suggests that either class AA use margarine for baking for instance, or, more likely, for their servants. Crawford and Broadley, *The People’s Food*, 39, 45, 61, 226.

³⁰² Tousley, R.D. “Marketing.” In *Margarine: An Economic, Social and Scientific History, 1869-1969*, J.H. van Stuyenberg ed., Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969, 227.

³⁰³ MOA, FR A9, Social Attitude to Margarine, December 1938

margarine to any visitor. They would be insulted if they knew. We are not poor enough to give anybody margarine,' wrote one.³⁰⁴

Another one answered:

I would never dream of giving it to visitors or friends even if I had to economize on food [...] if I had to use margarine, I suppose there would be some feeling of loss of social status.³⁰⁵

This strong rejection of margarine by the middle classes measured to its wartime consumption by the respondents can be seen as a demonstration of the unwilling social levelling down of their eating habits. This levelling down was perceptible regarding other commodities as well. These results confirm the negative impact of the war on the standards of diet of the respondents and presumably a majority of the middle classes.³⁰⁶ They also challenge the positive perception of the wartime diet sometimes found in the literature or even in the current public opinion, as illustrated by journal articles about the benefits of rationing.³⁰⁷ The perception of the war as a perfect time for education about nutrition as well as the importance of the governmental measures in the life of the British citizens (at least for 248 of them) is called into question as well. The lack of comments about governmental measures, communal feeding or educational propaganda is noticeable and nothing in the replies suggests a new knowledge about nutrition either. In addition, none of the respondents mentioned mock-dishes, particular cooking efforts or even the so often mentioned lack of onions or lemons.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ MOA FR A9 'Social Attitude to Margarine' December 1938, 2 Original underlines.

³⁰⁵ MOA FR A9 'Social Attitude to Margarine' December 1938, 2.

³⁰⁶ Calder, *The People's War*; Nelson, "Social-Class Trends in British Diet"; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*.

³⁰⁷ For instance: Drummond, JC. "Food and Health in Great Britain During the War." *Southern Medical Journal* 39 (1946): 18–26; Drummond, J. *The Englishman's Food : A History of Five Centuries of English Diet*. London: Pimlico, 1991; Harries, JM, and Dorothy Hollingsworth. "Food Supply, Body Weight, and Activity in Great Britain, 1943-9." *British Medical Journal* 1, no. 4801 (1953): 75–78; Magee, HE. "Application of Nutrition to Public Health Some Lessons of the War." *British Medical Journal* 1 (1946): 475–475 – 82; Burnett, *Plenty and Want*; Rohrer, "Should We Bring Back"; Williams, "Could Rationing Hold the Key"

³⁰⁸ Davies, Jennifer. *The Wartime Kitchen and Garden*. London: BBC Books, 1993; Minns, *Bombers and Mash*; Longmate, *How We Lived Then*; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 147.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to determine the extent of any changes in the wartime diet in comparison to the pre-war one through the analysis of the replies to the April 1943 Directive about the impact of the war on their eating habits. It has enabled a better comprehension of the factors involved in the wartime food situation and its perception by the respondents. It has established that time and social class were of great influence.

The general analysis shows a divergence between the perception of the modification of the diet of the respondents and the realness of the food situation in 1943. A significant number of respondents explicitly expressed little changes in their eating habits, while a degradation of the food situation and their diet is perceptible in their comments. Concerning specific commodities, the increase of the consumption of potato and bread, as well as the decrease in consumption of rationed foods, met the expectations. The unexpected significance of fruit can mainly be explained by its pre-war importance consumption to the social class to which the respondents belonged and the drastic reduction of its availability due to the cut in imports. The individual analysis, on the other hand, showed that the eating habits of many respondents were modified, but their uniqueness makes it difficult to define a general pattern. Hunger was not an issue, but the dullness and monotony of the wartime diet were commented on. The standardisation of food, the deterioration of its quality, the scarcity or disappearance of commodities and the lack of choice were also mentioned. In addition, no noticeable change regarding eating out is obvious in the replies and home seems to have remained the usual place of eating.³⁰⁹

The grouping of the information collected suggests that the respondents faced a levelling down of their middle-class standards of diet and adapted to less variety, less quality, more bread, more potatoes, less protein-rich foods, more meat substitute foods, less fruits and, finally, exception taken by some 'recalcitrant' to the consumption of margarine. In other

³⁰⁹ In contrast with Burnett, *England Eats out*.

words, they had to adopt a more working-class diet. This move is more perceptible for the respondents of class II, due to their eating habits being closer to the upper-middle class, than for respondents from class III, theirs being closer to the working-class ones. In addition to an impression of social levelling down, it seems that the perception of food more than the food itself was modified, as shown by the number of respondents mentioning being less faddy about what they eat.³¹⁰ Changes were perceived as temporary and taste rarely followed the trend. The fact that the more missed foods were not the more essential and nutritious ones is another indication that the respondents had enough to eat, but not the kind of foods they were used to or would prefer. As one respondent put it, there was 'no change in tastes, but change in the extent to which gratifying them'.³¹¹

Admittedly however, these changes are usually subtle. The general impression given by the respondents is that no major changes affected their diet and eating habits. This unexpected outcome contrasts with the comparison between rationed commodities and the consumption studies conducted by Crawford and Massey prior to the war. It also contradicts the testimonies of the people who participated in the survey of 1941. One explanation can be that the respondents got used to the wartime circumstances. The population in 1941 had a more vivid memory of their pre-war diet and was still adapting to the situation. Another factor is the year itself. 1943 was a relatively good year, especially when compared to 1941, described as the worst one for both the war abroad and the domestic situation.³¹² In addition, the social pressure preventing complaints and grumbles was probably even stronger in 1943 as the population was spared the worse scenario imagined (gas, defeat, invasion) and a future victory became conceivable.

In any case, even if not extensively described by respondents, changes had occurred in the eating habits of the population, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

³¹⁰ A few respondents mentioned being more interested in food and even eating in foreigner restaurants, another change of perspective.

³¹¹ MOA DR 1686, Reply to April 1943 Directive.

³¹² Longmate, *The Home Front*, 95.

Chapter II, Part II: The Diarists and Their Narratives

This chapter aims to present the diarists and their narratives. Using the quantitative and qualitative approach presented in the first section of this thesis, it firstly introduces the diarists so as to offer an insight into their professional, social and familial situations as well as their food priorities. Then it presents a global analysis of the diaries in order to establish the main similarities and differences of the wartime experiences expressed in the testimonies.

Seven women and a man aged between their early twenties to their early forties, and representing nearly all the social scale from an aristocrat to an electrician, have been selected on the basis of the significance of their descriptions regarding food matters. Four diarists were married, three with children, one widowed with children, the others were single. They lived in places as diverse as Glasgow, London and Bradford, renting a flat, a house and even owning an estate.³¹³ Some went to the university, others did not. Some were interested in politics, others focused mainly on their family or their work. The determination of their social class has been based on their occupation, standard of living, education and income, although their self-assignment, when expressed, was taken into account. The question of self-assigned social class could have been an issue. However, apart from one diarist (Amelia) the self-assignment and the criteria of determination correspond, suggesting that the diarists were well aware of the social norms and their own place on the social scale. Furthermore, the only exception is related to the loyalty of this diarist to her family history and not to her socio-economic situation, habits or attitudes. Thus, she was categorised accordingly to these criteria rather than her self-assignment.

Such a variety of diarists presents advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the examination of these narratives permits the extraction of different data to compare and

³¹³ It must be noticed that despite this geographical variety, the diarists lived either in urban or suburban areas, but not in rural area. Therefore, their testimonies reflects an urban type of wartime experience that could varie greatly from rural Britain one.

consequently allows the establishment of similarities and disparities between their writers. Additionally, it offers a better picture of the wartime situation, due to the variation of perspectives. On the other hand, their individuality limits a generalisation of their analysis. Nevertheless, the testimonies reveal interesting shared points, such as the propensity of the diarists to usually show a greater focus on their personal lives and their relationships with family and friends than on the war or the political, this including their interest in food matters.

The main issues revealed by the examination of these diaries are the impact of the food shortages, the importance of the time passing as well as the influence of the personal circumstances on the priorities and perspectives of the diarists. Due to the fact that only one diarist was a man, it has been impossible to make relevant gender comparisons. Nonetheless, sex did not seem to be a factor of influence regarding this group of civilians. Interestingly, the age factor does not seem to affect the wartime food experience of the diarists either, in contrast with their professional or familial status, as more common points can be seen between diarists sharing the same priorities, working or having children, for instance, than the same age or even social class.

The diarists, whose names have been changed in order to preserve their anonymity in accordance with Mass Observation Archive requirements, are presented in alphabetic order. Their situation has been determined on the information found in their file, their Directive Replies and the personal remarks and comments made in their diaries. Therefore, the quantity of information varies, due to the disparity of personal facts available in the sources.

1. The Diarists

Amelia, Diarist Number 5240

(Directives 1048)

Amelia was forty-two years old at the outbreak of the war. Single, she worked as a teacher and lived alone in a house situated in Watford, Hertfordshire. Amelia came from a working-class family of craftsmen and farmers. The relationships between the nine members of her family seem close, with numerous visits and mutual help. Food purchases, for instance, was discussed and arranged between the mother and the sisters. The rations were pooled and the mother and sisters did the shopping, a great advantage for Amelia as she was working full-time.³¹⁴ Despite her five years of secondary school, her profession and her amity with middle-class colleagues and friends, Amelia felt she belonged to the working class.³¹⁵ Her dissociation from the middle class could be the result of her social prejudice (she disliked the upper classes) or previous negative experiences, as suggested by her sensitivity to the better off dictating to the unemployed how to manage their expenses and avoid luxuries such as having a piano (she had one) or going to the cinema.³¹⁶

Concerning her eating habits, Amelia ate mainly at home or with her family, but took her midday meal at school or, occasionally, in a café or restaurant. The very few descriptions of her meals indicate a plain diet: toast and marmalade for breakfast, toast and meat for lunch, fruit and cereals, sultana bread and cake for tea and a dinner composed of rolls and cheese were described in October 1940, echoing the few other examples provided.³¹⁷ The meals taken at school are similarly simple, with salad, Spam or corned beef and mashed potatoes, but it is not possible to say with so few examples.³¹⁸ Suffering from digestive

³¹⁴ MOA D 5240, December 1940, September 1941, February 1942.

³¹⁵ MOA DR 1085“Class, June 1939.

³¹⁶ MOA DR 1085“Class, June 1939.

³¹⁷ MOA D 5240, October, December 1940; December 1941.

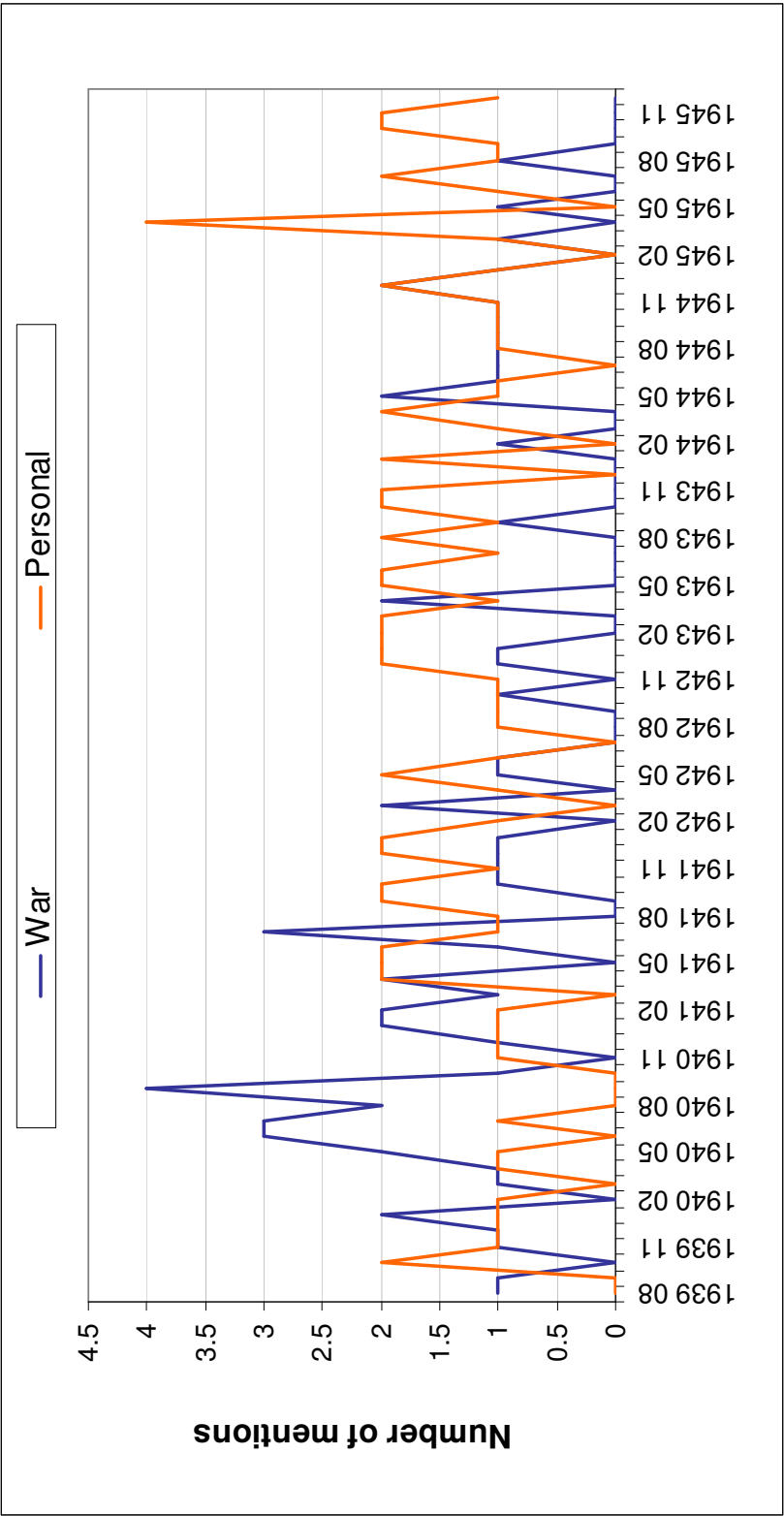
³¹⁸ MOA D 5240, May 1943; April 1945.

health issues, Amelia was on a special diet limiting her consumption of fat and fibres, a difficulty in wartime. She did not get enough meat, cheese or jam to balance these restrictions and she felt that she should be allowed a larger meat ration because her digestion was ruined during the Great War.³¹⁹

Amelia wrote profusely about food, partly because of her health issues. However, she also wrote about the war and personal topics, especially her work, as demonstrated on the following table:

³¹⁹ MOA D 5240, March 1940; MOA DR 1085, Physical health, January 1942.

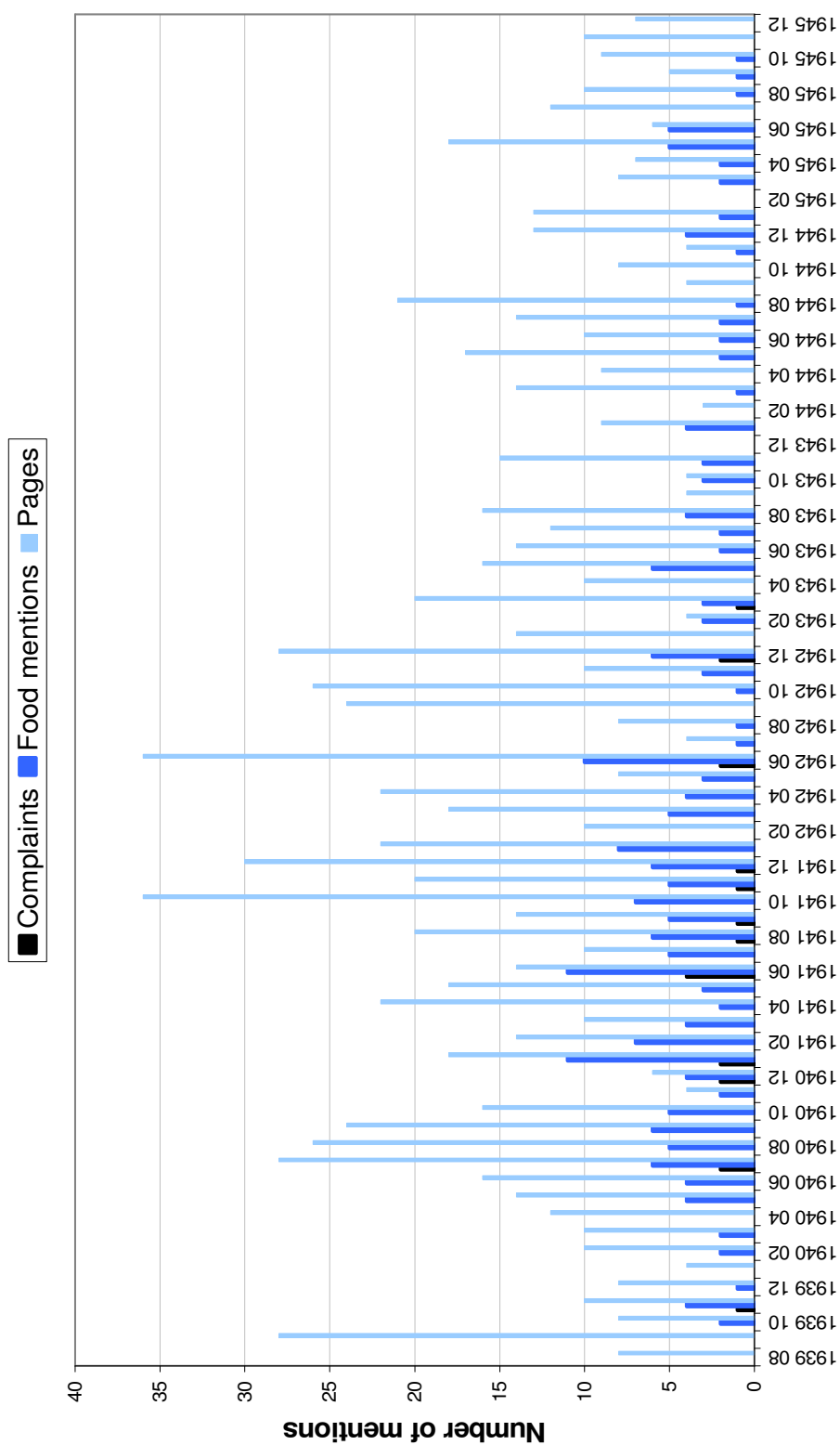
Figure 30: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5240 Amelia



As can be seen in figure 30, the importance of personal or war issues evolved in time, usually in accordance with the war situation, as she wrote regularly about the war news. Air raids, for instance, were a main worry (her house was damaged during the bombing). The bombings in 1940-41 and 1944 were an important source of comments. She also feared a German invasion in the summer of 1940. Regarding personal issues, she wrote extensively about her work throughout the war. She showed a marked interest in the 'women's conscription in 1941, the Beveridge report in 1943 and the General Election in 1945. Amelia also wrote about wartime inconvenience, such as the blackout and clothes rationing (1940 and 1941) and transportation (1940, 1941 and 1943). In addition she discussed her health issues, including surgery in 1942. Her holiday in April 1941 or the cold winter in 1941 and 1944 were also significantly commented on, while reported speeches were another important component of the diary.

Her range of interests and concerns are visible on the chart below, which compare between the number of pages, the number of food mentions and the number of complaints she wrote.

Figure 31: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints, diary 5240 Amelia



A concentration of food mentions from mid-1940 to the end of 1942 followed by a decrease of pages written, food mentions and complaints since 1943 is visible on the graph. This decrease can be due to having less time or less things to write, maybe due to the improvement of both war and food situations as well as her adaptation to wartime circumstances. Some recurrent topics are noticeable in Amelia's concerns and complaints about food, specifically fruits, especially oranges and lemons, but also the shortage of meat, milk and her difficulties with the wartime starchy diet were regularly commented on.

Celia, Diarist Number 5423

(Diary from 1941) Directives 2903 (from 1942)

Celia had the same age and training as Amelia, but there ends their similarities. Forty-three years old in 1939, Celia lived near Bradford, Yorkshire with her husband, an employee in a bank, and their son, a student at Oxford before being conscripted and sent to India. The family lived in a house with a dining and a sitting room, a bathroom, central heating and a telephone. They had a garden and an allotment. An income of £500 per year, and a few days of annual holiday are mentioned in April 1943, but Celia did not write much about their finances, mainly because of her lack of interest as long as the bills were paid.³²⁰

The family income and standards of living, the occupation of her husband as well as her work as a teacher prior to her marriage correspond to the middle-middle class criteria, as does her attitude and various activities. Celia expressed strong opinions, firmly defending morality. She commented abundantly on the readers' letters in newspapers in her diary, and was particularly critical of the Government.³²¹ She said being 'pretty catholic in her taste', supporting the Empire and disagreeing with those who 'work and pray for its

³²⁰ MOA DR 2903, January, February, April 1943; MOA D 5423, October 1941, March, September, December 1942, April, November 1943.

³²¹ MOA D 5423" August 1941, September 1941.

dissolution'.³²² She was also very busy. She played golf and tennis on a regular basis, was involved in many committees and associations such as the Women Guild, the University Women Federation, the Canterbury Community Centre Committee or the nursery committee, and was implicated with Czech refugees.³²³ In spite of these numerous activities, she affirmed to be much more alone than before the war, scarcely leaving the house during the blackout.³²⁴

Concerning her wartime diet and eating habits, there are inconsistencies in her testimony. While she stated in 1943 that their diet has not changed greatly, she also remarked that they were much shorter on eggs, sugar, butter, milk and fruits. These specific commodities were also mentioned in her diary and she made remarks about particular food, such as tomatoes or fruits, consumption of which was limited due to shortages or rationing. She complained about the scarcity of fish on various occasions, reporting protests about a 'fish famine' in Bradford in November 1942.³²⁵ According to these comments, the eating habits of the family suffered especially from the wartime restrictions of protein foods, while they compensated the shortage of vegetables with their garden and allotment.

Celia's numerous activities and their importance in her diary explain the significant predominance of personal mentions in comparison with those related to the war:

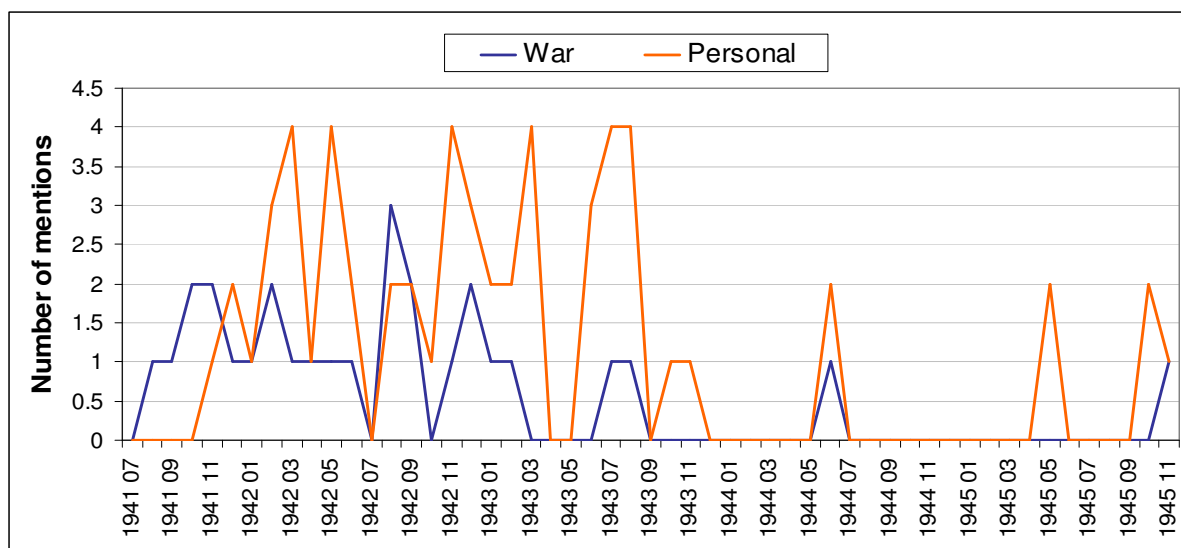
³²² MOA DR 2903, January 1942.

³²³ MOA D 5423, October, November 1941, December 1942.

³²⁴ MOA DR 2903, January 1942.

³²⁵ MOA D 5423, October 1941, April, November 1942.

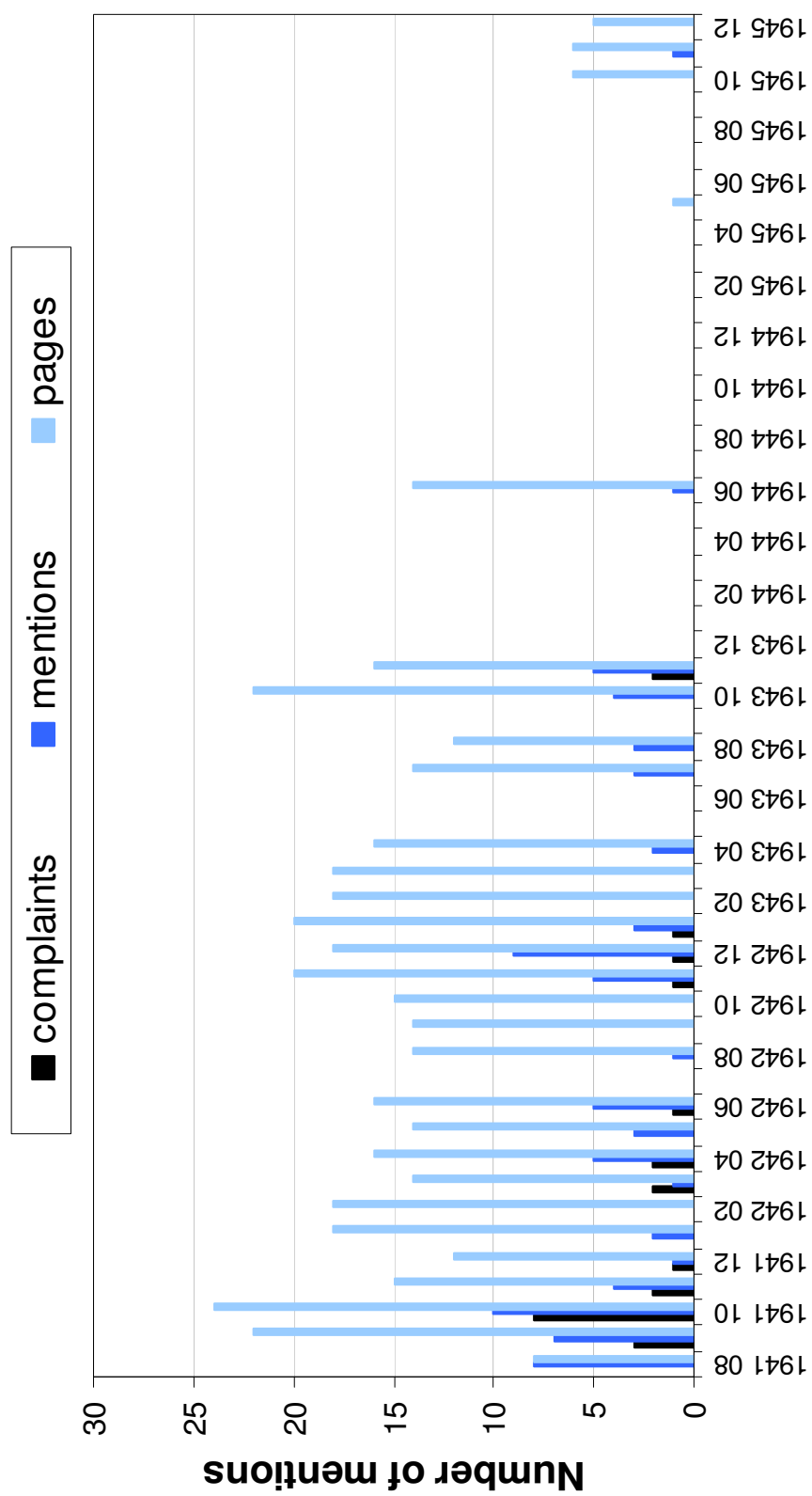
Figure 32: Comparative war and personal mentions diary 5423 Celia



As observable on figure 32, while she was especially focused on the war between August and December 1941, writing about Russia, Japan and the USA, her personal mentions increased from 1942. The shortage of coal, the income tax and the weather were her main topics (in addition to the expression of her personal opinion and her comments about the readers' letters published in newspapers present in the whole diary). After the departure of her son for India in September 1942, she began to write about him regularly. The war in Italy and Russia in 1943, the French campaigns in 1944 and the Pacific in 1945 were also significantly mentioned. In the same period, the Beveridge Report (1943) and the General Election (1945) were discussed.

Concerning food, the comparative graph below reveals the irregularity of her concerns and the importance of her complaints, particularly in 1941:

Figure 33: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints diary 5423 Celia



This irregularity is related to her abundant writing on specific food issues at given times. In contrast, her comments non-related to food between September 1941 and December 1943 are more consistent. Similarly to Amelia and most diarists, Celia wrote about the war abroad, but also female conscription and the weather.

Clara, Diarist Number 5318.1

(May 1941 to June 1943)

Clara, twenty-four years old in September 1939, lived in Bradford like Clara. She was married to a fireman, and mother of two young children, a boy and a girl, aged three and one respectively.³²⁶ The family resided in a house with a front and back garden that she used to grow vegetables.³²⁷ Clara looked after her family and home without any help, making and knitting her children's clothes in addition to the housework, shopping and gardening.³²⁸ The children were central in Clara's life and consequently in her diary. She went regularly to the clinic to get cod liver oil and juice for them and wrote abundantly about their health and their diet. However, she also had a social life and cultural interests. She often met with friends for a tea and a talk and went to meetings with the WVS and to conferences. In addition, she was taking Esperanto courses in evening classes.³²⁹

The lack of additional information about their income, Clara's education or potential employment prior to her marriage makes difficult the determination of her social class. The profession of her husband (which could be related to the war and different from his previous occupation) could be categorised from skilled to unskilled occupation, thus indicating rather a working-class affiliation.³³⁰ However, their housing and standard of living as well as her attitudes (nutritional and educational interest, knowledge and

³²⁶ MOA D 5318.1, January, March 1942.

³²⁷ MOA D 5318.1, September 1941.

³²⁸ MOA D 5318.1, August, September, October 1942.

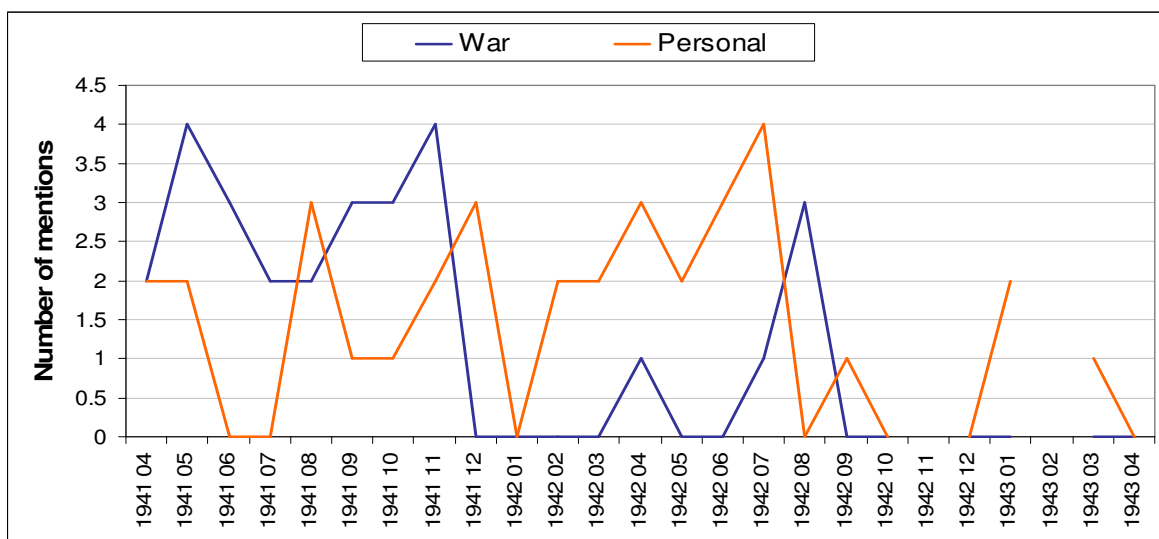
³²⁹ MOA D 5318.1, October, November 1941, January 1942.

³³⁰ Armstrong, "The Use of Information about Occupation" 204.

discourses, for instance) place her rather in the middle class. In consequence, despite the occupational criterion, Clara's social class was defined as lower-middle class.

Her tasks as a full-time housewife and mother can be seen in the number of personal mentions, although Clara focused rather more on the war during the first months of her diary:

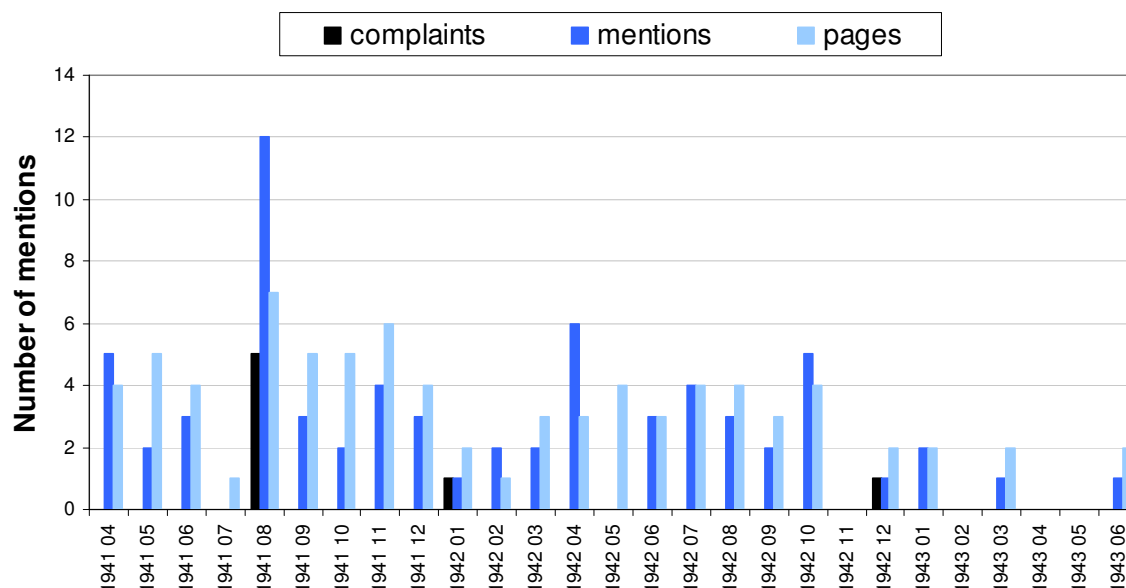
Figure 34: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5318.1 Clara



As is noticeable in the table of figure 34, the war was a main component of the diary between April and November 1941, with comments about the blackouts and bombings, as well as the situation abroad. Then, reflecting the importance of her family, the price of toys and Christmas predominate in November and December. In 1942, Clara essentially wrote about her children, this included war-related issues such as the impact of air raids, sirens and bombings on her terrified daughter. Additionally, she discussed the weather, the everyday difficulties, the conscription of women and their holiday. Her health issues and the surgery she had were her predominant topic during the last months of her diary in 1943.

Food, either related to her children, the difficulties or her health issue, was a significant part of her diary, as visible on the following table:

Figure 35: Comparative table number of pages, food mentions and complaints diary 5318.1 Clara



This significance is demonstrated by the number of mentions about food compared to the number of pages written. Clara's main interest in food was related to her children and their health. Therefore her priority regarded vitamins, with a focus on fruits, oranges in particular, and vegetables. The noticeable peak in August 1941 is related to difficulties in shopping and unfairness of distribution, again particularly in regard to oranges. However, complaints were rare, maybe due to a particularly positive personality, or because she was used to a simple life as suggested by the few meals described either at home or out.³³¹ A remark made about a meal served in a meeting confirms her easy contentment:

We had cold meat and salad and one small pat of butter and one lump of sugar was allowed each person at meal times. This was the only indication of rationing there was, the food was excellent, and there was plenty of it.³³²

Such simplicity is also noticeable in the testimony of the next diarist, Edna.

³³¹ MOA D 5318.1, December 1941, July, October 1942.

³³² MOA D 5318.1, June 1941.

Edna, Diarist Number 5390

Directives 1085

Edna was 36 years old at the beginning of the war. Single, she lived in Glasgow, Scotland, sharing a flat with her mother (in her 70s) and her brother (a lecturer at the University prior to the war).³³³ Educated in a convent, she was forced to work as an office girl after her father died when she was 14 years old.³³⁴ However, she took night classes and successfully graduated (MA). Speaking French and German, she became foreign correspondent for a shipping company, where she was still working at the outbreak of the war. Mostly for financial reasons she decided to quit and became secretary to an American Army officer from October 1942 until March 1944, when she was made redundant. After the war she became a civil servant.³³⁵

Edna defines herself as middle class with 'one foot in the professional class (having a degree) and the other foot in business class (working for a trade company)'.³³⁶ She faced money difficulties after her father's death, but in January 1939 she wrote about having 'quite good income nowadays' reporting a salary of under £200.³³⁷ She had friends with various occupations and levels of income, however. While she did not appreciate the high class, she also distinguished herself from the working class (defined as unskilled and unapprenticed labour).³³⁸ Interested in cultural, political and intellectual life, she was a member of the Glasgow Association University Women and the Sorooptimists International Society. In addition, she went to lectures, exhibitions and classical music concerts and was a devoted newspaper reader

Like Clara, Edna focused a lot on food and nutrition. However, although her health was an important factor for her interest, Edna was also worried about her weight and

³³³ MOA DR 1085, June 1939.

³³⁴ MOA DR 1085, April 1939.

³³⁵ MOA DR 1085, January 1939, April 1939, October 1942, March 1944, 1947.

³³⁶ MOA D 5390, July 1941.

³³⁷ MOA DR 1085, January, April 1939.

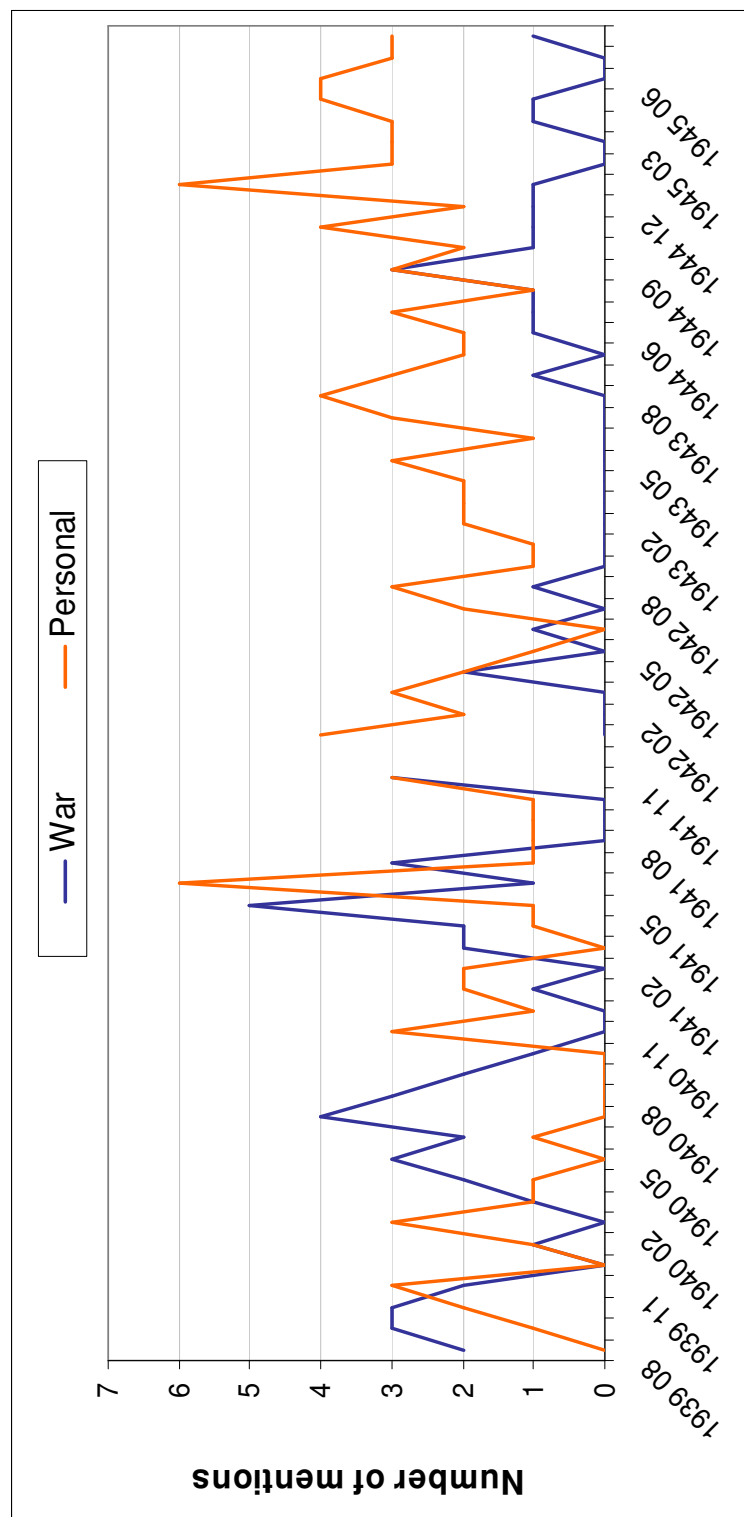
³³⁸ MOA DR 1085, June 1939.

consequently preferred a diet with less carbohydrate.³³⁹ Similarly to Amelia, the challenges put by the war on her pre-war eating habits or her favoured food was a great concern and the source of numerous comments.

Her various interests and her focus on food explain the predominance of personal mentions in her diary, as noticeable on the following table, although the war could be an important topic:

³³⁹ MOA DR 1085, July 1939.

Figure 36: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5390 Edna



As can be seen on figure 36, a progression of Edna's main priorities is noticeable in the pattern of her mentions regarding the war or personal issues. The war, its consequences at home (blackouts, difficulties in shopping) or development abroad were significantly discussed between 1939 and 1942, usually in parallel with personal issues, except between March and September 1940 when the Blitz, the situation in Europe and a potential defeat and invasion predominated. A regain of interest for the war is perceptible in 1944 and 1945, with mentions about the war in the Pacific, the V1 and V2 and the atomic bomb. However, the progression and importance of personal comments shows her priorities. Her personal centres of interest (intellectual, feminist, political and cultural matters) were significantly talked about.

Her work and her colleagues were another major topic with her family. In addition, the weather, transport issues and her difficulties feeding her canary were regularly discussed.

Figure 37: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints diary 5390 Edna

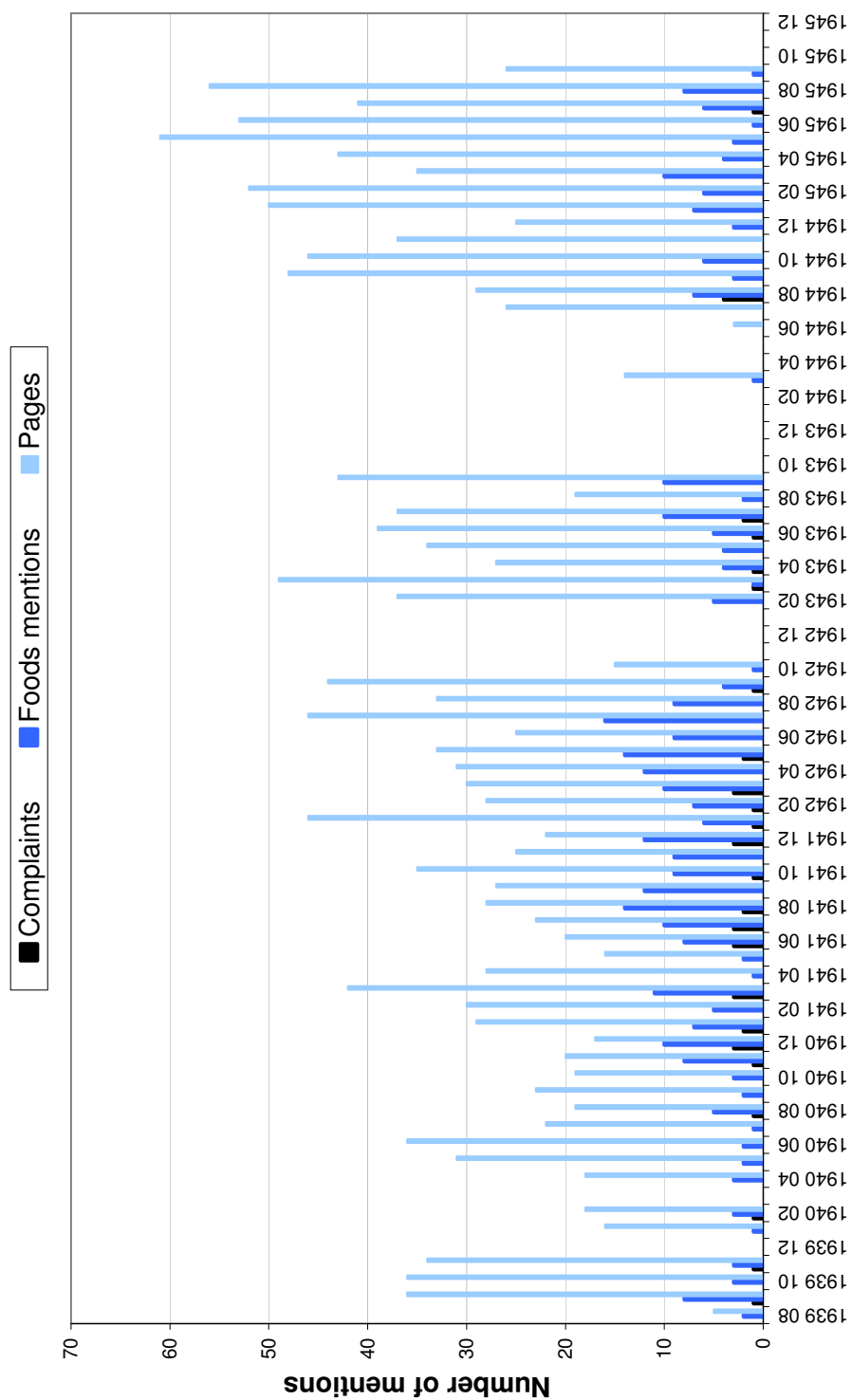


Figure 37 shows a predominance of food mentions and complaints from mid-1941 to mid-1942, and the ratio between the increasing number of pages and the decreasing mentions of food demonstrate her evolution of priorities and concerns. Mentions related to food were mainly about the wartime complications in Edna's everyday life. Without a garden or an allotment, the family relied entirely on shopping for their food supply.³⁴⁰ This dependence made Edna more vulnerable to the market. The increase of prices was a major issue between 1940 and 1941.³⁴¹ In addition shopping was difficult and the new "take it or leave it" attitude of grocers made it unpleasant.³⁴² Her change of employer in 1942 greatly improved her food situation. Not only did the raise in salary give her more latitude when shopping, but she was in charge of her American colleagues' ration collection. This new responsibility gave her the opportunity to shop during work time and to get what her colleagues did not want.³⁴³ However, Edna was disturbed by their systematic use of the black market.³⁴⁴ She was also upset by the waste of their meat ration (looking only for mince meat for hamburgers, her American colleagues did not use their meat rations for anything else). She resented such a waste as she 'could do with more meat', a comment indicating the negative impact the food restrictions on her diet.³⁴⁵ Nonetheless, from 1943 to the end of the diary, only occasional increases of food mentions are noticeable. They were mainly related to specific issues, such as fruit, or specific events, such as holidays. Her last comments about food were related to worries about the future and reported angry speeches about a continuation of rationing to feed Europeans (Germans in particular).

³⁴⁰ MOA DR 1085, June 1939.

³⁴¹ MOA D 5390, April, June 1940; December 1941.

³⁴² MOA D 5390, March, June, July, August, October, December 1941, January 1942.

³⁴³ MOA D 5390, July 1943.

³⁴⁴ MOA D 5390, April 1943.

³⁴⁵ MOA D 5390, July 1943.

Irene, Diarist Number 5427

Directives 2500

Despite her young age, 27 years old, Irene was a widow with children of pre-school and school age.³⁴⁶ Living in a residential district of London, Maida Vale, her housing and standards of living established her upper-middle class affiliation. Her house had at least two floors, her bedroom, the bedrooms of the children, a nursery, a kitchen with an electric stove, two bathrooms with two baths (both filled with water every evening), a scullery, a garage and a basement.³⁴⁷ A shared hired car brought the children to and from school, where they had their midday meal. Despite having a garden, Irene did not grow vegetables and did not keep hens.³⁴⁸ She had at least one servant, a housekeeper and a nurse, although she would cook and manage the housework when necessary. She had her groceries ordered by phone and delivered, but the shopping was also done by her servant or herself.³⁴⁹ Irene had a very busy social life, often eating out with friends (recurrent in the diary), usually in expensive restaurants (the Savoy, the Mayfair).³⁵⁰

Irene qualified herself as housewife and volunteer worker. Indeed, she volunteered for eight months and wrote abundantly about this experience in addition to her private and social life, as reflected in the number of personal mentions recorded in the table below:

³⁴⁶ She did not precise how many, but mentioned two babies and complained at one occasion to have to keep the five children inside.

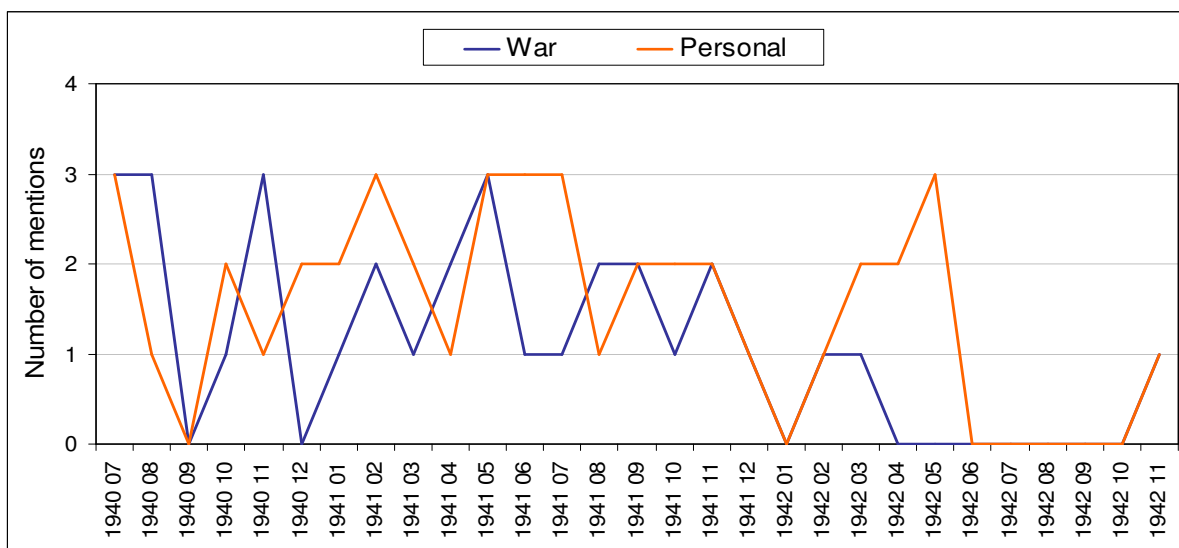
³⁴⁷ MOA D 5427, October 1940.

³⁴⁸ MOA D 5427, April 1942.

³⁴⁹ MOA DR 2500, February, November 1942, October/November 1943; MOA D 5427, April 1942.

³⁵⁰ MOA DR 2500, February 1941, March 1942, October/November 1943.

Figure 38: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5427 Irene

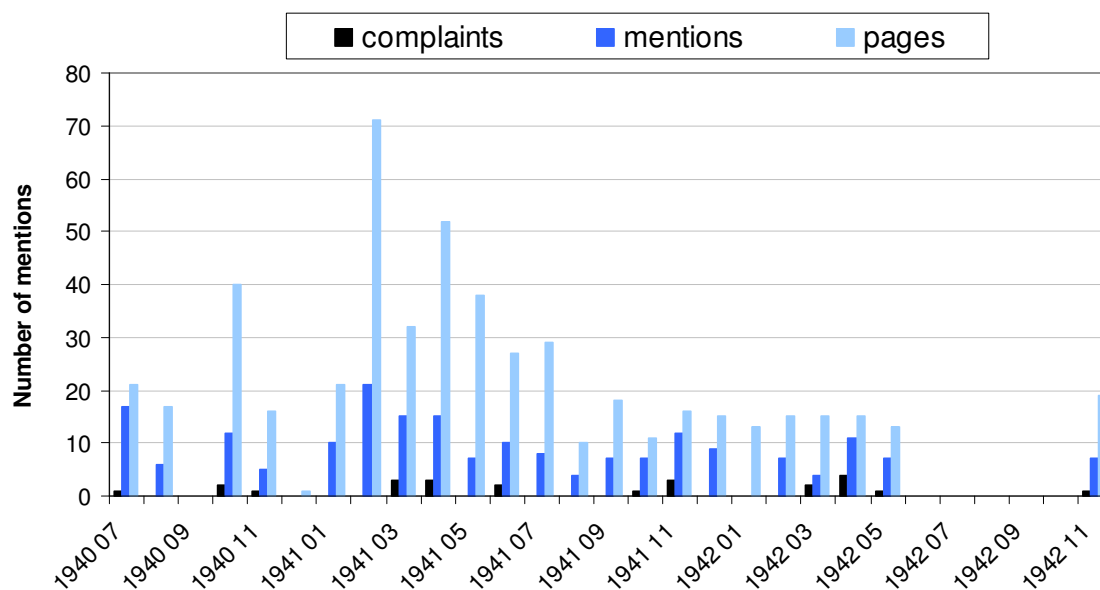


As visible in figure 38, Irene discussed the war situation as well. She firstly focused on war issues at home, such as the air raids (her area was bombed in July 1940) or the risk of invasion, then, from June 1942 she wrote mainly about the international situation. Nonetheless, numbers of her concerns about the war were related to personal issues. For instance, like most other diarists, she wrote about women's conscription, but in regard to its consequence, namely the loss of her maids.³⁵¹

Concerning her personal comments, her voluntary work in a canteen, domestic matters and the weather were important topics in her diary. Complaints were an important part of her narrative. The shortage of cigarettes, for instance, was a recurrent source of grumbles between March and June 1941. Complaints about food were also numerous, as visible in the following chart:

³⁵¹ MOA D 5427, September 1941.

Figure 39: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints 5427 Irene



The comparison between the number of pages, the food mentions and the complaints shown in figure 39 suggests a period of great interest for the diary between January and July 1941. The substantial numbers of mentions about food in the whole diary indicates its significance in her everyday life. She focused mainly on protein-rich food such as eggs and milk (important for the children). Food quality and quantity were important for Irene who thought that their diet had significantly degraded. However, the meals she described are varied and nutritious. They contained meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, milk and butter, suggesting that she managed very well despite the wartime circumstances. The divergence between her opinion and the meals depicted suggests a pre-war diet of higher standards (quantity, quality and variety) as well as her frustration regarding the wartime restrictions (regularly expressed). On the other hand, the meals described indicate her wealth as well and they raise questions about the extent of potential illegal purchases.

Lillian, Diarist Number 5239

Directives 1346

The youngest diarist, Lillian, was 22 years old in September 1939. 'Born and bred' in London, she lived in various places during the war. Engaged to James in October 1940, she got married in February 1941. The couple moved to Lancaster, before moving back to London when James joined the Army in November 1942. During his training they resided in a hotel with other officers and their wives and after his departure for India in February 1943, Lillian stayed in London, where she found a new job.³⁵²

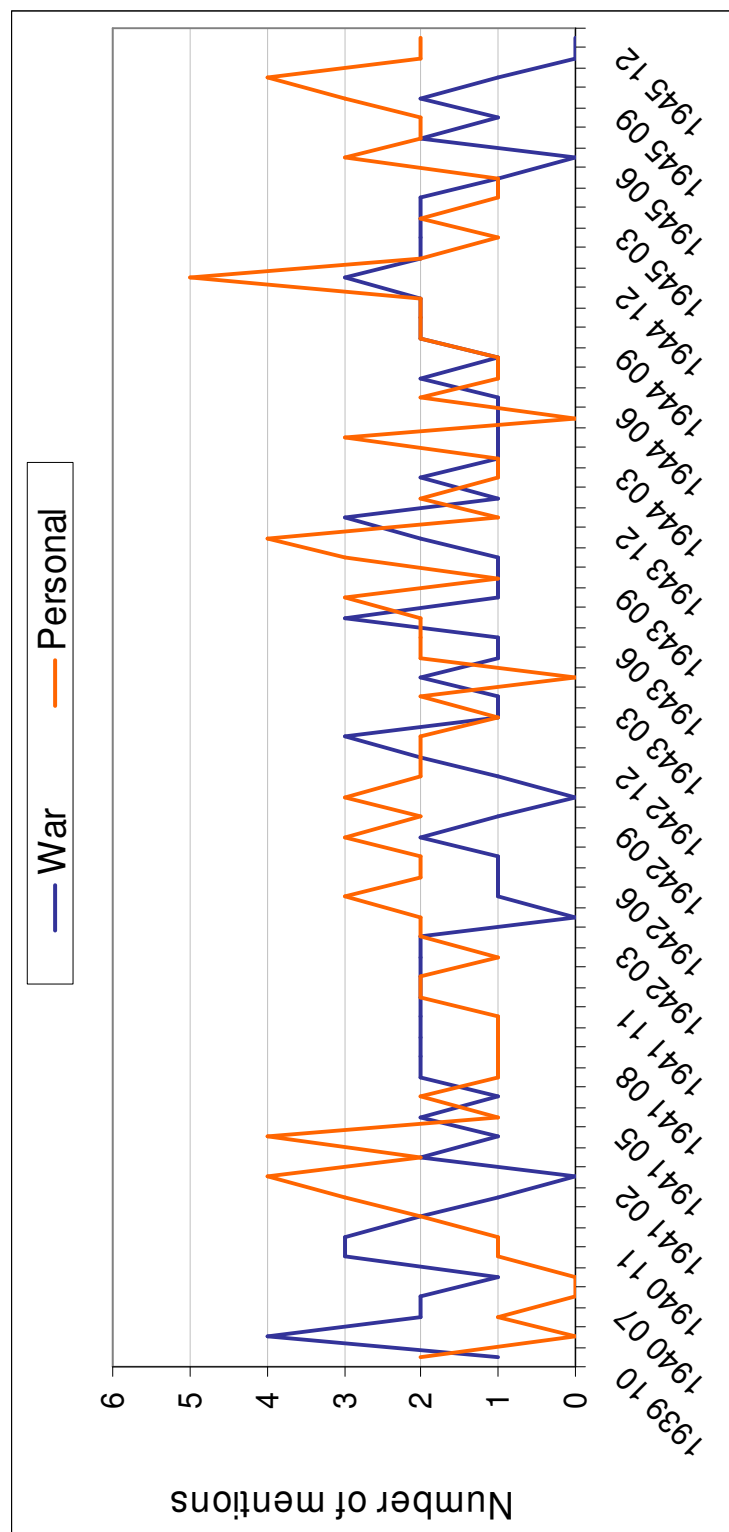
Lillian, considered as 'quite nice but somewhat crazy intellectual' by her neighbours, according to her testimony, liked bird watching, finding wild flowers, and spending weekend young hostelling and climbing with James.³⁵³ She shared some moments of their intimacy in her diary, giving the image of a young couple deeply in love. She suffered from his departure and their long separation caused depression, aggravated by issues at work. She was a mathematician (statistician) and aerodynamicist.³⁵⁴ She qualified herself as professional and middle class and distinguished herself from the working and lower-middle class or the tradesman. This self-assignment corresponds to her background. Her father was a music master. She had a good education (better than her parents or grandparents) as she studied mathematics (with a scholarship) at Cambridge, where her husband studied medicine (with a partial scholarship). Her friends were middle and upper-middle class. Lillian did not consider income as an essential social factor since they never had much. Nevertheless, her parents had a maid (she mentioned a cleaner in July 1942 when living with her husband). She gave no information about her income, but she did not seem to have financial difficulties. A car was mentioned in July 1942 and she wrote about weekends away in the countryside, staying and eating in hotels, however, nothing luxurious.

³⁵² MOA D 5239, October 1940, February 1941, September, November, December 1942, January, February 1943.

³⁵³ MOA DR 1346, June 1939, December 1940, January 1942.

³⁵⁴ MOA DR 1346.

Figure 40: Comparative chart war and personal mentions diary 5239 Lillian



In contrast with the previous diarists presented, Lillian kept writing about the war on a regular basis. Interested in international affairs, she followed the evolution of the war and the international situation, and wrote significantly about it.³⁵⁵ She also wrote about the war at home (preparation and evacuation in 1939, air raids in 1940, 1941 and 1944 or women's conscription in 1941) but her focus was more on the situation abroad. From 1945 she concentrated on the end of the war, the post-war situation and the atomic bomb.

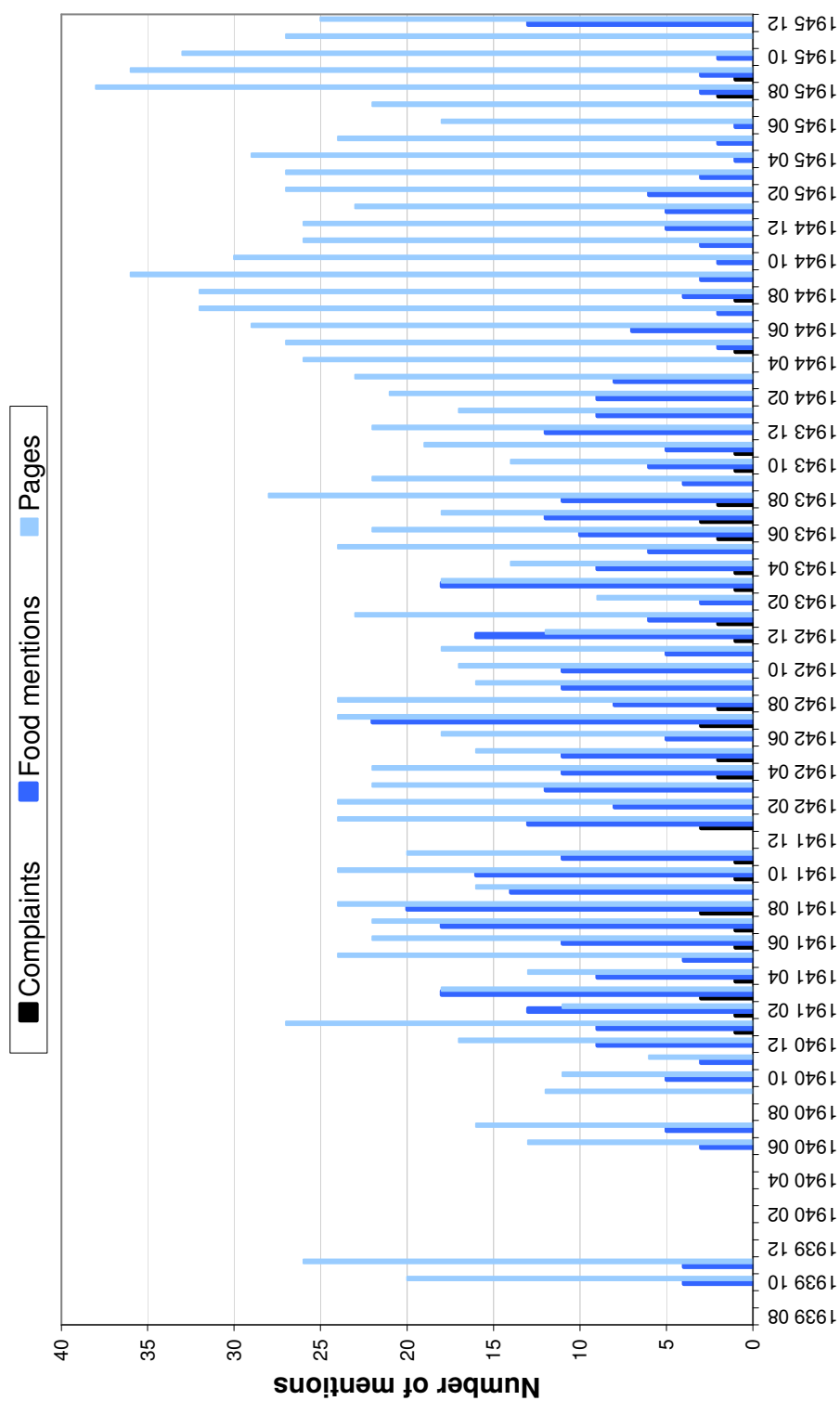
Her personal mentions are divided between private issues (engagement, wedding, family, work), political (particularly since 1944 with the questions of the reconstruction and the world situation) and everyday issues (the weather, the shortage of coal, the rationing of clothes, shoes and fuel). From 1943, her husband (now in India) became a main topic in Lillian's diary, as did her new job in London. Holding a function categorised as essential for the war effort, she could not resign or reduce her hours despite health issues and depression.³⁵⁶ Her condition and mood deteriorated in 1944 and 1945, aggravated by the long demobilisation (hers as well as her husband's).³⁵⁷ In the same period, her concern for her own future became apparent.

³⁵⁵ MOA DR 1346, June 1939, December 1940, January 1942.

³⁵⁶ MOA D 5239, April 1944.

³⁵⁷ MOA D 5239, January, March, July 1944, June, September 1945.

Figure 41: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints diary 5239 Lillian



As observable on figure 41, food mentions are an important part of her diary until mid-1944, especially in 1941. The increase of written pages from 1944 reflects her issues at work, the expression of her feelings about James as well as her worries and hopes about the future. Likewise, the decrease of her mention about food denotes her change of priority. The significant presence of complaints from 1941 to 1944 indicates regular, still variable difficulties (scarcity of commodities, difficulties shopping). Although less noticeable during 1945, their persistence shows the existence of occasional significant issues (reduced fat rations, shortages).³⁵⁸

Lillian was well aware of the importance of good nutrition, as indicated by comments about the lack of fats and proteins and the degradation of their diet. The reduction of protein-rich commodities intake (meat in particular) was a main issue to her, although she also focused on chocolate. She wrote about its scarcity and all the opportunities to get some, demonstrating the importance of personal tastes in the analysis of eating habits.³⁵⁹ Actually, Lillian is the only diarist who mentioned chocolate on such a regular basis during all the war, even though Norma described some chocolate craving as well.

Norma, Diarist Number 5378

(Published diary including an introduction providing important personal information)
Directives 1534

Norma was 41 years old in 1939. She came from an aristocratic Scottish family, but she grew up and received her education in Oxford. She had five children (and a baby girl born in 1940 who did not live) and she took in three evacuees from Glasgow.³⁶⁰ Her comments about children mostly refer to the evacuees, as her own youngest children were in boarding school most of the time.

³⁵⁸ MOA D 5239, March 1941; August, September, December 1945.

³⁵⁹ MOA D 5239, October, December 1940, January, March, May, July, November 1941, January 1944.

³⁶⁰ Mitchison, Naomi, and Dorothy Sheridan. *Among You Taking Notes: The Wartime Diary of Naomi Mitchison, 1939-1945*. London: V. Gollancz, 1985, 31-32.

She described herself as a writer, farmer, housewife and mother. Her husband was a barrister, educated at Eton and Oxford. In 1945 he was elected MP (Labour) at the General Election.³⁶¹ An active socialist herself, Norma was involved in the Labour party, the Fabian Society and the Society for Socialist Inquiry.³⁶² She considered herself an intellectual due to her profession and education, and not her economic position. She qualified herself as upper class, land-owning and aristocratic, coming from a family that had no involvement in commerce, but to the 'service to the state' for which 'class loyalty is to the truth', as she expressed it.³⁶³ Their standards of living and education confirm this social categorisation. They used to live in a large house in London; the couple had an extended social life involving artists, writers and intellectuals. At the outbreak of the war, Norma and the children moved to the estate they bought in Scotland. In addition to their house, land and rented cottages, the estate included a farmhouse with livestock, poultry, vegetables and fruits.³⁶⁴ They employed numerous workers for the house (maids, cook) and the estate. Three Land Girls came to help in 1942. Her husband stayed working in the south but made frequent trips to Scotland.³⁶⁵ They used to go fishing several times a week and hunting several times a month. They owned two cars, used a laundry service and ordered food by phone. Norma made regular trips to London and Oxford, travelling by plane. She used to shop at Harrods.³⁶⁶

Norma was a very prolific diarist. She discussed everyday life matters, the war at home and overseas. The atomic bomb is the last topic tackled in August 1945. However, personal mentions predominate in her diary, as indicated by the significant ratio of personal mentions in figure 42.

³⁶¹ Mitchison and Sheridan, *Among You Taking Notes*, 19.

³⁶² Mitchison and Sheridan, *Among You Taking Notes*, 17.

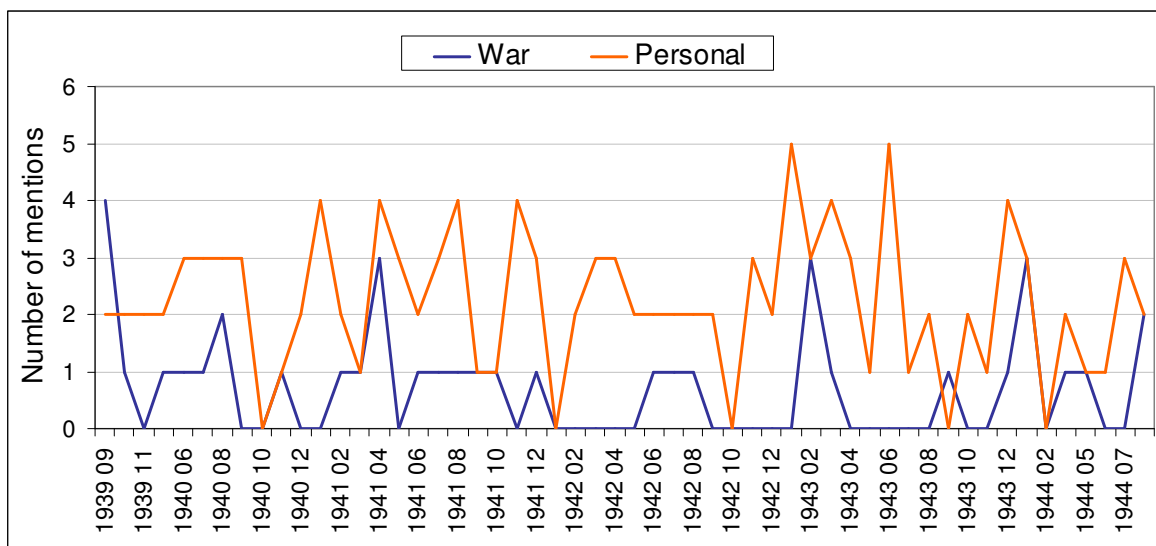
³⁶³ MOA DR 1534, "Class", June 1939; Mitchison and Sheridan, *Among You Taking Notes*, 17.

³⁶⁴ Mitchison and Sheridan, *Among You Taking Notes*, 31-32; MOA D 5378, August 1941.

³⁶⁵ Mitchison and Sheridan, *Among You Taking Notes*, 16-17.

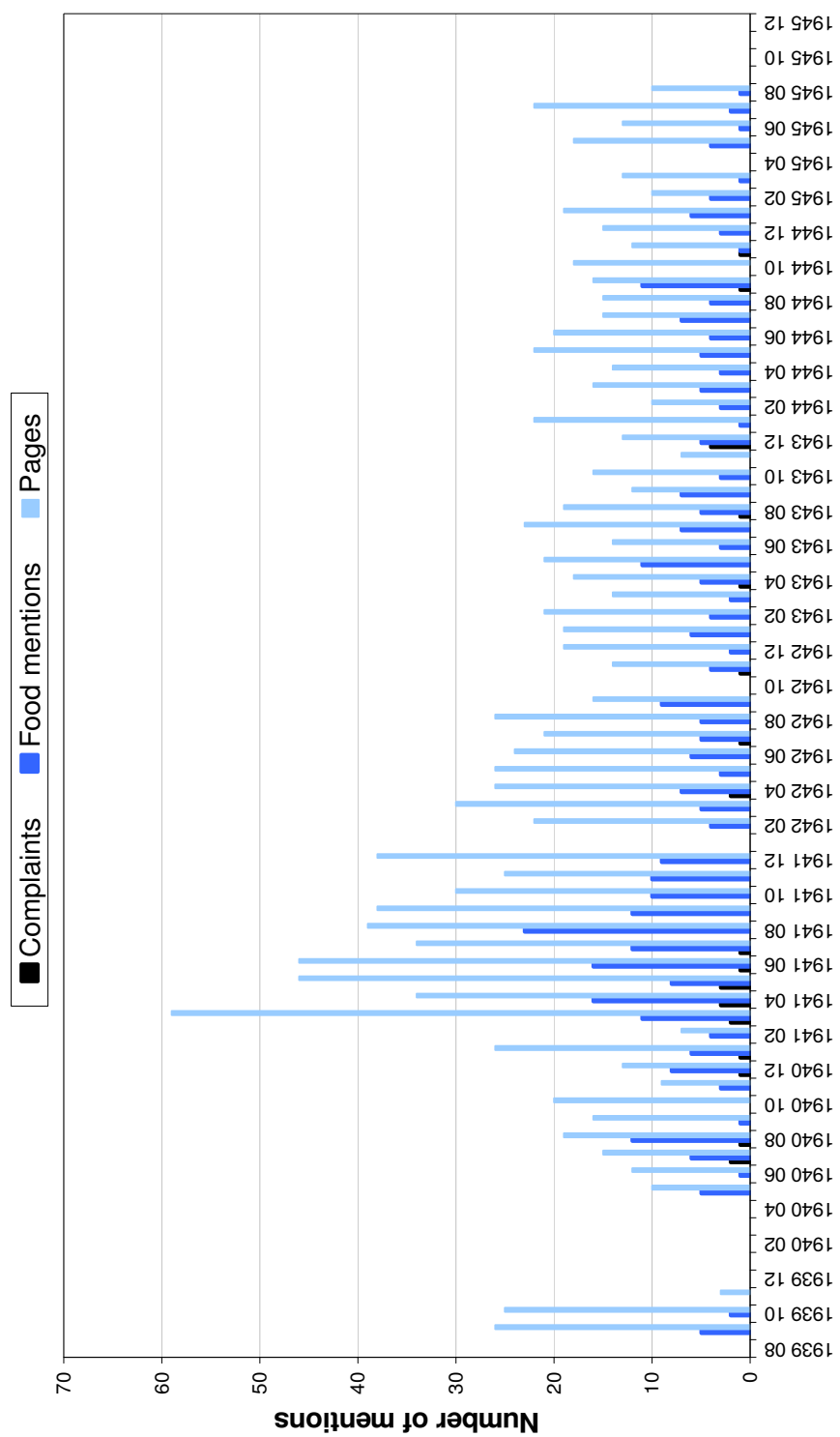
³⁶⁶ MOA D 5378, January, October, November 1941, July, September 1942.

Figure 42: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5378 Norma



The predominance of these personal mentions is explained by the importance of running the farm, the house keeping, her publications as well as her interest in politics. Moreover, a significant part of her diary was dedicated to reported discussion she had about political issues (social classes, nationalism and feminism appears periodically from 1941) or related to daily routine. The weather was another regular topic discussed, often in relation to farming.

Figure 43: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints diary 5378 Norma



As noticeable in the above chart, food was a major subject in Norma's diary. The wartime food situation complicated the management of the household and food practices, but also modified her priorities, bringing out some social attitudes maybe not usual prior to the war. Her complaints were mainly on food quantities and the problem of cooking with the restrictions or the shopping difficulties.³⁶⁷ Many of the issues were rather trivial, such as purchasing Indian tea instead of Chinese (her favourite) because it made more for the household, Norma was quite obsessive about sugar, writing abundantly about its rationing and her efforts to save it (mainly for jam making, another of her major issues).³⁶⁸ However, despite her complaints, Norma, like upper-class Irene, managed the wartime food situation quite well thanks to the farm, the hunting and fishing and their financial means.

The last diarist presented, Robert, had no such opportunities.

Robert, Diarist Number 5201

Directives 1161

Thirty-two years old at the outbreak of the war, Robert was married and father of two young children.³⁶⁹ They lived in Hampshire, renting a three-bedroom house (two floors, a scullery, a bathroom, a sitting room, and a kitchen) for less than 15s.³⁷⁰ An electricity sub-station attendant, Robert planned to have his own radio repair shop after the war.³⁷¹ There is no specific mention about his income, but he reported having received 1s and 6d from National Health insurance for three days of illness compensation. He reported a colleague's salary at £400 and a friend receiving similar wages, but paying £1 in tax. The fact that Robert did not pay this tax suggests a lower income. According to his testimony,

³⁶⁷ MOA D 5378, September 1939, August 1940, April, May, November 1944.

³⁶⁸ MOA D 5378, May, July, August, December 1940, March, June, July, August, September, October 1941, July 1942, July, August, September 1943, August 1945.

³⁶⁹ The oldest started council school in April 1942, the youngest was born in 1940

³⁷⁰ MOA DR 1161, June 1939.

³⁷¹ MOA D 5201, October 1939, August, September 1942, January, November 1943.

they financially struggled and had £10 of saving.³⁷² He considered himself as working class because of working for a living rather than his income. His wife and all his friends were working class as well. His housing, the education of his son and his manual occupation sustains his statement, but he was a skilled worker and his salary should reflect his qualifications. The mentions about financial issues were more about limits to their possibilities than difficulties. He mentioned the purchase of a second-hand sewing machine and owned a sidecar. The decision to sell the sidecar and buy a second-hand car in 1945 (a third child was expected) suggests some financial means.³⁷³ They had a garden of some importance, according to the harvests mentioned.³⁷⁴ They also kept a significant number of chickens. The relationship with his family (he mentioned his mother, a sister and a brother) and in-laws were close. They visited each other regularly and supported each others.³⁷⁵

His main wartime issues were the high price and shortage of goods and the size of the rations, especially sugar and butter.³⁷⁶ There is not much written about their eating habits, but he mentioned regularly the vegetables from their garden, their eggs and meat (canned or fresh, they seem to have at least a Sunday roast every week), indicating a nutritionally adequate diet.

³⁷² MOA D 5201, March, November 1940, October 1941, December 1942.

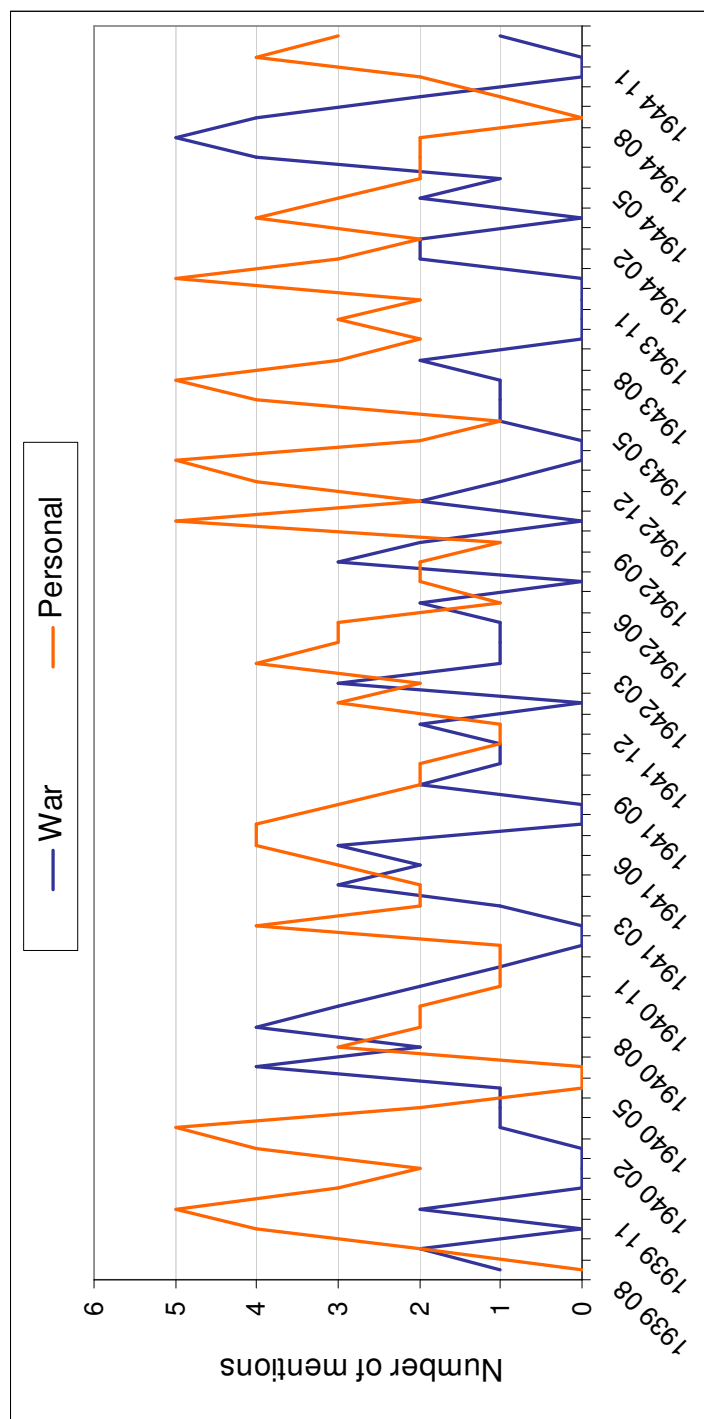
³⁷³ MOA D 5201, September 1945.

³⁷⁴ Spuds, carrots (30 pounds), beans, haricots (5 pounds), runner beans (salted 15 pounds), shallots (9 pounds), onions (2 pounds), beets, parsnips, and greenstuffs MOA D 5201, October 1940.

³⁷⁵ MOA D 5201, July, October 1941.

³⁷⁶ MOA DR 1161, December 1940, January 1942.

Figure 44: Comparative table war and personal mentions diary 5201 Robert



The comparison between war and personal mentions on figure 44 shows a predominance of personal mentions. The war mentions are irregular with two significant peaks in 1940 and 1944, mainly due to the bombings (their house was bombed in August 1940).³⁷⁷ Robert discussed Dunkirk, Pearl Harbour and Dresden as well as the situation in North Africa and Russia. He also wrote about the Blitz, the risk of a German invasion, the evacuees, the blackouts and the demobilisation. Interestingly, he is the only diarist to mention the costs of the war, expressing his worries about its impact on their budget:

Personally I am beginning to be scared at the immensity of the sum of money being poured down the drain labelled War. The "Herald" this morning talks about £250,000,000 for American aircraft and the show's only been on six months. Pre-war times already seem like a paradise of low price and taxation.³⁷⁸

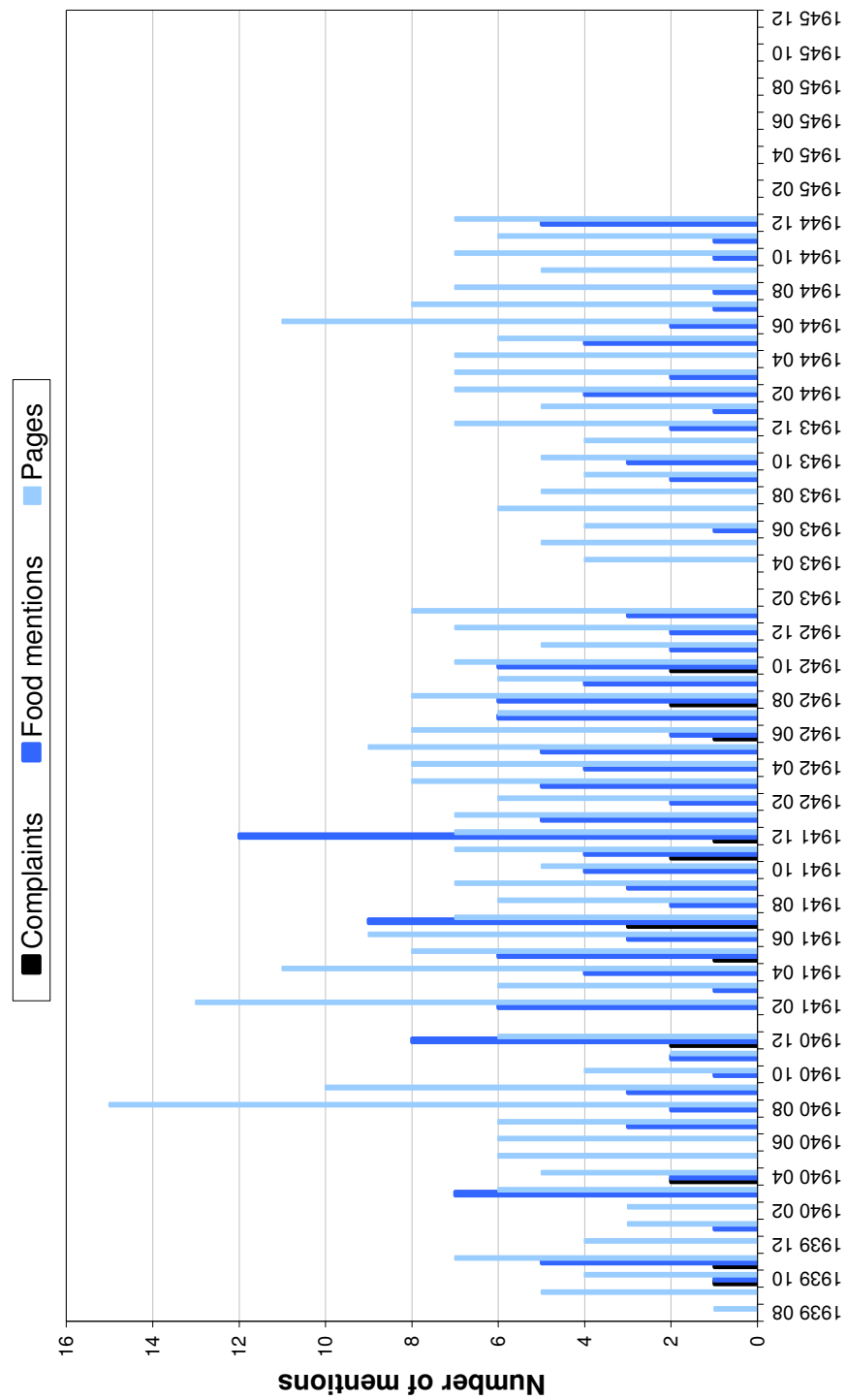
This comment echoes many others about expenses made from the beginning of the war until 1942. The cost of goods, from cigarettes to the pram for the baby, was a subject of indignation. However, the health of the family (between January and April 1944, their eldest son was often ill), his work, his garden and his chickens were the main issues he wrote about. Another concern until 1943 was finding food (and spare money).³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ MOA D 5201, August 1940.

³⁷⁸ MOA D 5201, March 1940.

³⁷⁹ MOA D 5201, March, October 1941, February, June, November 1942, December 1943, January, April 1944.

Figure 45: Comparison number of pages, mentions of food and complaints diary 5201 Robert



As visible in figure 45, mentions about food are regular and numerous in 1941 and 1942. Complaints are significant, even if sporadically, between 1939 and 1943. The number of food mentions decreased and became irregular while the number of pages written stayed quite similar, indicating the emergence of other priorities to be discussed. The reason for these mentions and complains evolved over time. At first, complaints about the price, the quality and the distribution of commodities were important.³⁸⁰ Later his focus was on the shortage of potatoes and fruits, the lack of cereals and not having enough milk for the baby.³⁸¹ From 1942, he wrote rather on the restrictions, the decrease of the rations and the power given to butchers in such time. Meat and oranges were two main commodities mentioned by Robert, the first one due to its scarcity and price, the second one because of their shortage, an issue related to his children and the need of vitamins.

Robert, like the other diarists examined, presents a particular social and familial background that influenced his priorities and perspectives regarding the wartime food situation. The next section of this chapter presents the comparative analysis of the diaries. It aims to provide more specific details about the everyday lives of the diarists, to reveal the main similarities and differences found in the narratives, and to offer potential explanation for such differences.

2. The Narratives

The study of the diarists as a group uncovers significant common points and divergences regarding their everyday practices, experiences and opinions. The mixed methodological approach of the diaries facilitates a better contextualisation and comparison of the information gathered, as well as offering potential supportive elements regarding the arguments defended in the thesis. While the quantitative analysis enables me to define the diarists' priorities and their development during the war, the qualitative analysis

³⁸⁰ MOA D 5201, December 1940, May 1941.

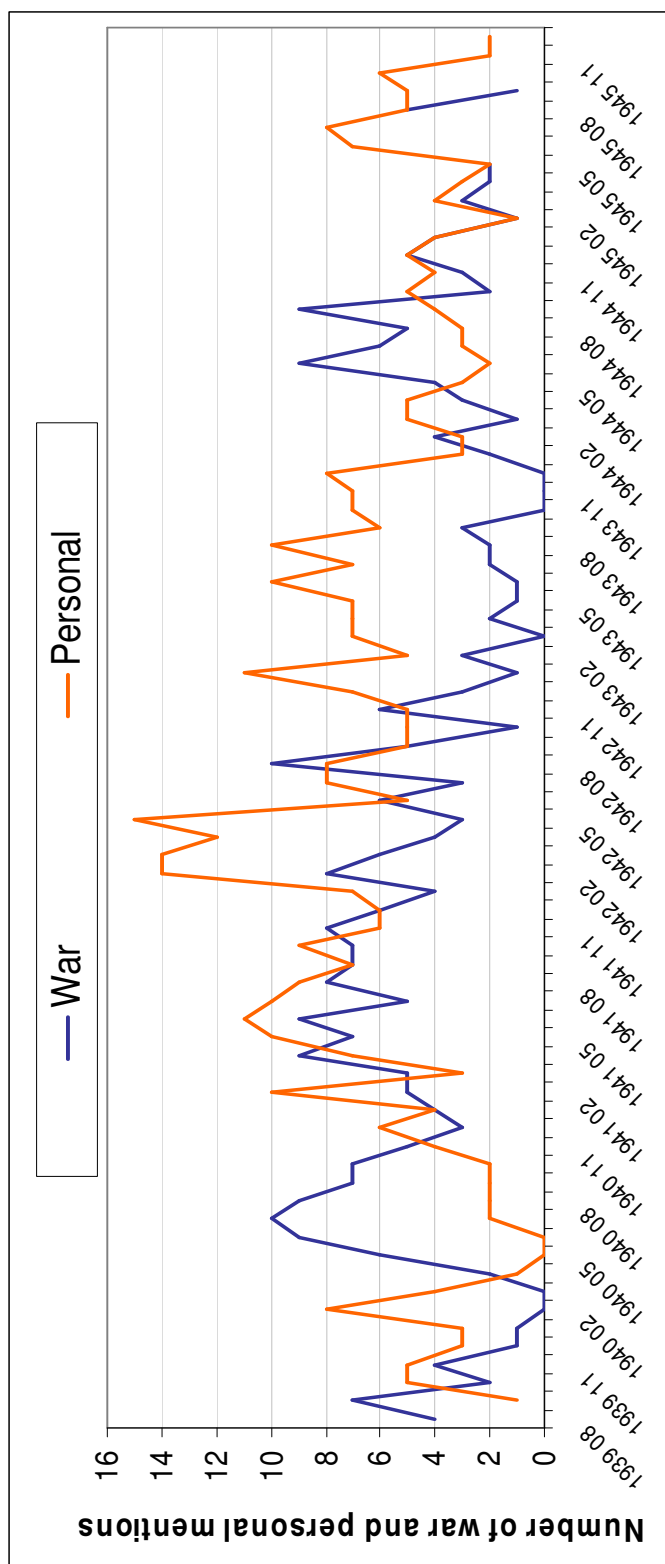
³⁸¹ MOA D 5201, July, November, December 1941, October 1942.

indicates the evolution of their situations and perspectives over time. However, the determination of the importance of food matters in the lives of the diarists demands a measure of the degree of importance of other issues.

The Home Front

In order to evaluate the importance of the various topics discussed in the narratives, the individual data presented in the biography have been grouped together and examined (taking into account the variation of the number of diarists per month and without the number of pages written, impossible to standardise). The following charts express the result of the quantitative side of the process while the analysis explains their features and informs on the main themes discussed by the diarists.

Figure 46: Group comparison of war and personal food non-related mentions



As can be seen on figure 46, the comparative analysis of the main food non-related issues shows a competition between war and everyday life issues. After the hurried evacuation on September 1939 and the preparation for the war that provoked many remarks, the eight months of 'Phony war' provided the space to reflect upon personal matters. From May 1940, however, the succession of defeats abroad added to the fear of invasion and the bombing at home (three diarists had their homes damaged) modified the ratio of comments, revealing the weight of the war on the minds of the diarists (and the rest of the population).³⁸² The debacle in Norway and France in May and June, as well as the bombing and air raids between June and November were noticeably discussed. However, no diarists faced a dramatic situation. Therefore, none reached the degree of emotional stress shown in the wartime testimonies of those having a beloved one missing, injured or deceased, for instance.³⁸³ From December everyday life concerns regained some importance once the anxiety about invasion and questioning about the future quietened and then, the personal issues mostly predominated until 1944.³⁸⁴ The last wave of V-bombing provoked an increase in war comments in spring and summer of 1944, while the General Election, V-Day, the atomic bomb and post-war expectations were commented on in 1945.

Despite their remarks on political and war affairs, the diarists were, on the whole, more focused on their personal lives, their family and friends than on the global situation. That is not to say that they did not show interest in other issues, but their personal interests and priorities influenced greatly the extent of their curiosity or awareness as regards the rest of the world. For instance, Roberts and Clara focused essentially on their family and everyday lives. Their disinterest in political issues could be the result of being parents of young children, but could also relate to their level of education. The diarists showing the

³⁸² MOA D 5240, November 1945; MOA D 5201, August 1940; Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 2002, 44.

³⁸³ See Milburn, Clara. *Mrs Milburn's Diaries : An Englishwoman's Day-to-Day Reflections 1939-1945*. London: Futura, 1989, 40-48.

³⁸⁴ The peak period related to personal mentions in 1942 should be considered as an abnormality due to the combination of various diarists writing about two children who were ill, domestic issues and a change of work at the same period of time

higher interest for politics and international affairs, Lillian, Edna and Norma, had degrees. Nonetheless, Edna was single, Lillian was childless and Norma's children were either grown up or in boarding school. Thus, both social class and personal characteristics can explain, at least partly, a variation of interest. The significance of war events and their narration in the diaries is also correlated to the personal impact on the lives of their writers. The conscription of women, to take that example, was noted and discussed by the female diarists and not by Robert, and their observations varied accordingly to their personal situation and personality.³⁸⁵

Due to her age and not having children, Lillian was the only one who really worried about being conscripted. However, because she had 'a household and a husband to look after' she was finally not enlisted (which was a relief).³⁸⁶ Two main points emerged from the diaries: social class tensions and divergence of attitudes and the significance of the traditional female role in response to conscription. The first one was displayed by Irene. She firstly reported what she considered aggressive discourse of her children's nurse regarding those having others doing all the work and hoping that servants would be 'called up'. Secondly she commented on the lack of 'patriotism spirit' among 'those of her sort' and educated people, endeavouring to avoid conscription (an issue that was not of her concern as she had young children) and refusing to do any voluntary work.³⁸⁷ It seems that these women, in contrast with the upper-class ones who dedicated their spare time to public service and WVS, discussed by James Hinton, were rather the ones who employed it 'in the pursuit of frivolous, hedonistic, or purely selfish ends', an attitude hardly acceptable in wartime and not accepted by Irene's nurse.³⁸⁸ The second point was noticeable in Lillian's recounting of the reactions to married women's conscription. She related a husband declaring that 'if his wife was taken, he would give up Home Guard and

³⁸⁵ From December 1941, after having to register in order to potentially be conscripted, women between 20 and 30 could be enlisted for service in the military or in industry. Rose, *Which People's War?*, 109.

³⁸⁶ MOA D 5239, August 1941.

³⁸⁷ MOA D 5427, August, September 1941.

³⁸⁸ Hinton, James. *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 3.

all war work' because he could not be asked to cook his own meals while working all day.³⁸⁹ Some showed indignation to the idea of her possible conscription, not because of the disturbances in her life, but because the lack of governmental consideration for husbands.³⁹⁰ The conscription itself was influenced by the marital status of women rather than their age:

When the woman who interviewed me [...] found out that I had a household and a husband to look after, she said that I would not hear from her again and that I would not be compelled to take a job. She told me that they were calling the girls who were just living at home with their mother.³⁹¹

The testimonies suggest that no one was pleased with women's conscription and the idea to work in munitions. Such resistance to industrial work has already been demonstrated by the small amount of women volunteering to work in industry without financial motivation.³⁹² In contrast with young women from lower classes whose wages would have increased significantly in industry, the middle-class working women described in the diaries were rather afraid to have to give up their current occupation to work in a factory.³⁹³ The rejection of domestic duties in favour of the wartime effort promoted by Lady Reading was not successful either, as the domestic role of women kept its essentiality.³⁹⁴

In both cases, as for any other topics, personal priorities and the direct impact of a measure influenced greatly the importance given to these subjects in the diaries. Some issues were commonly discussed though. The weather was regularly mentioned,

³⁸⁹ MOA D 5239, July 1941.

³⁹⁰ MOA D 5239, October 1941.

³⁹¹ MOA D 5239, October 1941.

³⁹² Summerfield, Penny. *Women Workers in the Second World War : Production and Patriarchy in Conflict*. London; Dover N.H.: Croom Helm, 1984, 31.

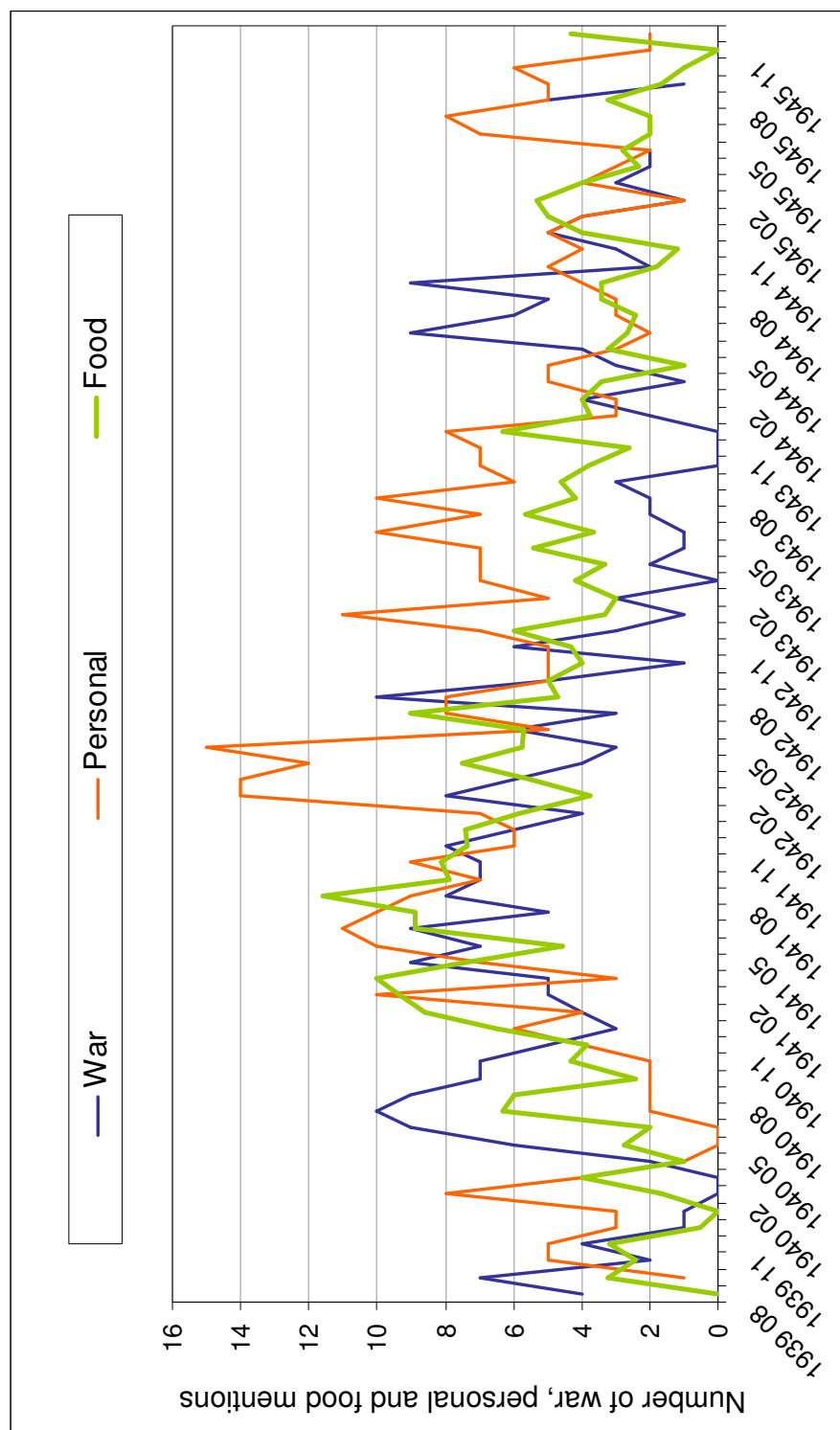
³⁹³ Bruley, Sue. "'A Very Happy Crowd': Women in Industry in South London in World War Two." *History Workshop Journal*, no. 44 (1997), 64; MOA D 5240, December 1941.

³⁹⁴ Summerfield, *Women Workers*, 1984, 33.

especially in winter and often associated with the shortage of coal, while work, households and children were frequently mentioned as well.

The same common and individual perspective is present in the observations made about food. Despite individual food priorities, the diarists shared common issues or wrote about the same specific subjects, often regardless of their social and personal background.

Figure 47: Group comparison food related and non- food related mentions

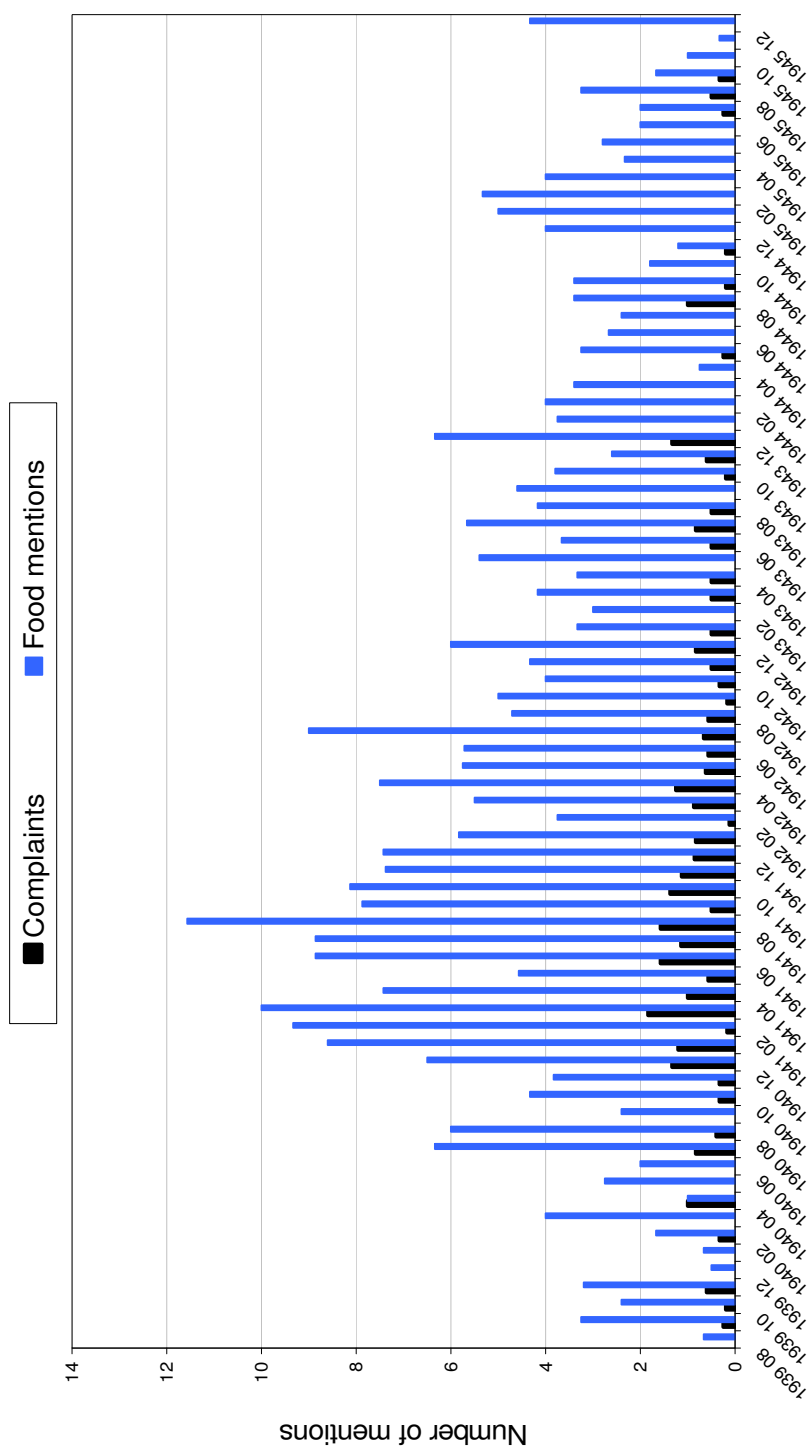


As demonstrated on figure 47, the focus on food evolved over time, interestingly following the general pattern until 1942, then developing its own pattern. From this quantitative analysis it is obvious that the food question was of great importance for the diarists during the period between mid-1940 and the second half of 1942 (1941 in particular). The relationship between the wartime policy and the variation of mentions about food is visible due to the delay of reaction demanded to adapt and the evolution of the food situation. The diarists needed some time to get used to the rationing implemented in January 1940 or the point system in December 1941, which explains the interval between the implementation and their reaction or the expression of their opinions. Additionally, they faced the increase of prices as well as the drastic decrease in the supply of imported foods during the first years of the war.³⁹⁵

A situation that is reflected in the pattern of mentions and complaints about food presented in the following table:

³⁹⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 17–19; Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 110–11.

Figure 48: Proportion of complaints in mentions of food



As it can be seen on the table, the pattern determining the importance of food in the diaries is similar to those of complaints, indicating that a significant part of their remarks were either criticisms or grumbles. The regular decrease of mentions or complaints regarding food between 1942 and mid-1943 suggest an improvement and/or an adaptation to the situation. Between 1944 and mid-1945, complaints were insignificant before a last increase during the summer, as the food situation worsened again and the prospect of a continuing rationing provoked some reactions. An increase in the number of mentions is perceptible in summer for the whole war, in spring from 1940 to 1943 and in December since 1942. The summer increase is partially related to fruit and complaints about the sugar ration during the jam-making season, as well as the description of food eaten on holiday. As for December, Christmas increased the food comments. Not all comments were of a negative nature, as the pleasure to eat something nice or an increase of ration caused positive observations.

The Kitchen Front

The quantitative analysis of the diaries demonstrated a significant pattern regarding priorities and their evolution over time. A deeper analysis including a qualitative approach is needed to verify the extent of similar or dissimilar wartime food experiences and discuss the cause of significant dissimilarities, if any. The complaints expressed, the reported food shortage, the impact of the wartime diet on health, or the manner of obtaining food are all representative of the wartime everyday life of the diarists. The mixed analysis of the testimonies regarding these topics provides an insight into the predominant issues they faced and their opinions on them. Assessing the significance of food-related topics can be made quantitatively with key words or key meanings. A significant repetition of words or similar comments permits the definition of a pattern and a hierarchy of their importance, while the qualitative approach furnishes the context. The mentions about food shortages, for instance, are a good indicator of the wartime situation and its progression while informing on the habits of the diarists.

Food shortages

The impact of shortages can be measure through anecdotes reported by the diarists such as the longing comments made about the cheese sandwich by people watching 'Gold Rush Maysie', or a customer in a shop refusing any help with her bag, observing that none was needed to carry 'the little cut we can get'.³⁹⁶ As for the diarists, remarks about food shortages are concentrated between the end of 1940 to mid-1942 and decrease after 1943. Only a few observations were made in 1944, and the slight increase in 1945 was mainly about potatoes and bread. The commodities regularly mentioned by a majority of the diarists were meat, cheese and sausages in 1941 and biscuits and fish, mainly from 1941 to 1943. Occasionally, but still significantly, remarks about tomatoes, cereals, sweets and chocolate were made by one diarist or another. Irene complained about the shortage of mayonnaise, olive oil, and 'ready food in cartons', unsurprisingly suggesting a greater use of delicatessen and luxury groceries than the others.

Echoing the 1943 Directive Replies analysis, the main food mentioned for its shortage is fruit. From 1940 to 1944, fruit is mentioned by all the diarists, often repetitively, predominantly about oranges but also apples and lemons. Dried and tinned fruits are also mentioned numerous times. Fruits are mentioned in relation with their shortage, their price, their illegal purchase, the desire to eat them, but also the importance of their vitamins.³⁹⁷ Getting fruit was a source of contentment and even celebration, indicating their importance as well as their rarity.³⁹⁸

The shortage of fruit resulted in change of eating habit, such as Amelia having to renounce to her daily half a lemon or orange juice.³⁹⁹ The consequence of the decrease of fruit importations on the family diet was also commented on by Edna in summer of 1940:

³⁹⁶ MOA D 5240, January 1941.

³⁹⁷ MOA D 5239, July, October, December 1940, April, June, July, August 1941, January 1943, July 1944; MOA D 5240, January, February, May 1941, January 1944, January 1945.

³⁹⁸ MOA D 5240, January 1945; MOA D 523," July 1941, September 1942.

³⁹⁹ MOA D 5240, August 1940, February 1941.

Our consumption was comparatively low – in both meat and sweet we lagged behind our neighbours – but we did have a lot of fruit – both tinned and fresh – and how I miss it now. There is little in the shop and the prices are prohibitive.⁴⁰⁰

According to her, the imported fruit sold out quickly, the demand for the English ones less important, and the choice of tinned fruit was limited. Tinned peaches, pears, pineapple and apricot sold out in one day (only rhubarb and gooseberries were left) while it could take only minutes in the suburbs.⁴⁰¹ The importance of fruit for Edna is demonstrated by her numerous references, especially in 1942 when the fruit are said to be the ‘most difficult food to obtain’.⁴⁰²

Figure 49: Number of mentions about fruit by year (D5390 Edna)

1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
2	14	23	10	4	3

Norma too, expressed her feelings about the lack of fruit, illustrating in a few words the importance and the variety of imported fruits in their pre-war diet:

V. [daughter] had brought a small orange back from school; She and R. [secretary] and I ate it, feeling frightfully nostalgic and talking about fruit we had eaten, she [R.] about fruits at school, V. and I about fruits in London, always cases of oranges, big bunches of bananas and all the foreign fruits, the plums and apricots and passion fruits and lichees [...]. I can still smell orange on my fingers.⁴⁰³

The testimonies confirm the pre-war significance of imported fruit and the impact of their wartime limitation on the diarists’ eating habits. Their comments also point out a social variation of consumption. While upper-class Norma used to have expensive exotic fresh fruits, Edna, managing on a limited budget, rather bought cheaper exotic tinned fruit and less expensive fresh ones. Interestingly, fruit as a source of pleasure was emphasised by

⁴⁰⁰ MOA D 5390, August 1940.

⁴⁰¹ MOA D 5390, February, May 1942, February 1943.

⁴⁰² MOA D 5390, March 1942.

⁴⁰³ MOA D 5378, November 1941.

Norma, while middle-class diarists Edna and Amelia rather stressed the importance of their nutritional value, adding a reasonable and acceptable justification to their complaints. Parents were especially bothered with that issue. Robert and Clara's main concern was not related to their frustrated desire, but to the consequences of the lack of vitamins on the health of their children.⁴⁰⁴ The recurrence of comments about vitamins in these diaries reveals the importance of the scientific approach to food that developed during the interwar period as well as its impact on the 'good' mother and housewife's perspective, while their wartime lack was blamed for the degradation in the diarists' wellbeing.⁴⁰⁵

Health and Feelings

Mentions about health concentrate between mid-1942 and the end of 1943. This interval between the number of food mentions and health issues result, in all probability, from the time needed to physically experience the changes in diet. Various other factors such as lack of sleep, the increase in work intensity or the level of stress resulting from the war must be taken into account as regards health issues. Nevertheless, the wartime diet was the main explanation given by the diarists for their propensity to catch colds, for gastric problems, rheumatism, lost of weight and feeling weak, but also tiredness and even exhaustion, as well as feeling depressed.⁴⁰⁶

Lillian was almost certainly the most affected by the wartime food conditions. In good health prior to the war, she blamed the restrictions and the difficulties in finding nourishing food and adequate fat and proteins for being anaemic, very tired, prone to

⁴⁰⁴ This issue will be discussed specifically in the next chapter.

⁴⁰⁵ Brembeck, "The Twenty-First-Century 'Food Consumer'" 294–9 Asquier, Enrica. "Domesticity and beyond: Gender, Family, and Consumption in Modern Europe." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Trentmann Frank., Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 573; Yeo, Eileen Janes. "The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750-1914." *Women's History Review* 8, no. 2 (1999), 201–2; Davin, Anna. "Imperialism and Motherhood." *History Workshop*, no. 5 (1978): 9–65. Fielding, Steven. "The Good War 1939-1945." In *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939*, Nick Tiratsoo ed., London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997, 10–13.

⁴⁰⁶ MOA D 5240, March 1943, November 1944; MOA D 5201, March 1941, February, June, November 1942, December 1943; MOA D 5390, April, August, September, November, December 1941; MOA DR 2500, January 1942.

catch colds and for losing weight despite trying very hard to get calories and proteins.⁴⁰⁷ Challenging the official propaganda and Woolton's claim 'that the nation had "never been in better health for years"', she affirmed that the health of most people she knew had deteriorated since the beginning of the war.⁴⁰⁸ She recounted complaints about malnutrition, children's health deterioration, tiredness, weakness to colds and sore throats.⁴⁰⁹ Recognising the efforts made by the Government, Lillian nevertheless expressed her exasperation in October 1943:

I had got so tired of being told that we were a fitter nation. The food situation has been managed very well, but undoubtedly we are short of fat and protein and it beginning to tell.⁴¹⁰

Her opinion was shared by Celia, thinking that on the whole, health was deteriorating because of the wartime diet and the lack of vitamins, responsible for a weaker resistance to epidemic.⁴¹¹ As for Lillian, she felt more and more depressed as the war went on, an aggravating factor as it made her lose her motivation to make an effort to eat properly.⁴¹²

The testimonies of the diarists illustrate the divergence of the impact of the wartime diet on the population. The rationing had possibly benefited the lower class nutritive intake, as suggested by the anthropometric evidence presented by the British Medical Association, but the better off suffered from the deterioration of their pre-war diet.⁴¹³

The morale on the home front was, according to the Home Intelligence, mainly related to material factors, food in particular. The variations of mood in time found in the diaries corroborate such opinion. Insignificant before 1941, the number of comments about physical and mental fatigue increase from March 1941 to mid-1942, then decrease

⁴⁰⁷ MOA D 5239, October 1941, August, October 1942, March, April, August, December 1943.

⁴⁰⁸ Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 207.

⁴⁰⁹ MOA D 5239, August 1941, October 1942, January, June 1943.

⁴¹⁰ MOA D 5239, October 1943.

⁴¹¹ MOA DR 2903, December 1943.

⁴¹² MOA D 5239, November 1943, January, March, July, October 1944, January, June, September, October 1945.

⁴¹³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 139–40; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 162–5.

between September 1942 and March 1943 before increasing again until April 1944, reflecting the pattern of complaints about food presented earlier. From spring 1944, only two diarists expressed feeling low. Firstly Lillian, whose downhearted spirit was made worse by a separation from her husband, a situation increasingly difficult to support. Secondly Irene, feeling depressed and tired, sometimes without particular reason, sometime because of the wartime restrictions, sometime because of her health, two causes of complaint she shared with most diarists.

Complaints

Complaints are an essential part of this study. They express the unwelcome changes occurring in the life of the diarists, inform about their perception of the food situation as well as the problems they faced on a common and individual level. Despite significant disparities of income and standards of living, different personal backgrounds and priorities, the diarists had many complaints in common, most likely shared by a majority of the population.

Four main complaints stand out. Firstly, the quantity of food allowed. This was especially significant regarding milk and eggs. Other rationed commodities were mentioned as well, but on a more individual basis, reflecting individual priorities or preferences. Secondly, the difficulties in getting food: fruit, fish, eggs, cheese, bacon or ham were specifically mentioned by the diarists, while biscuits, cheese, sugar, sweets, and meat were mentioned regularly by one diarist or another, there too revealing personal inclinations and concerns. The third main complaint concerned the price of the food, also mentioned by all the diarists, but more notably by Robert, Amelia and Edna, certainly due to a lower purchasing power. The last main complaint was unfairness of distribution, a major reason for grumbles in the diaries either because of favouritism in shops or of neighbours' or friends' real or imagined advantages.

Quantity of Food

Either due to shortages or the rations allowed the reduction of the quantity of food and its negative impact on the diet and eating habits of the diarists is a key element regarding their narration about food. The degradation of the food situation was expressed in many ways, such as the following remark reported by Lillian in April 1941:

At the beginning of the war some people said we should be living on potatoes and oatmeal before it was over, and I thought that they were being over pessimistic, but it looks as though we may be reduced to that!
⁴¹⁴

Sometime the drastic deterioration of their diet was more specifically described, as by Edna in September 1941:

We are on to a different diet. Our consumption of practically everything strengthening is down. Here is this household on to a bread-and-margarine scrap meal three times a day. Only one meal (lunch) of a strengthening character – meat, vegetables, soup.⁴¹⁵

The testimonies confirm the findings of other studies as regards the diminution of protein-rich food consumption by middle classes during the war, but also the importance of the perception in the recounting of such impacts.⁴¹⁶ The pre-war habits influenced the degree of grumbles. Irene and Celia complained more significantly than Clara or Robert, for instance, and when comparing aristocrat Norma and working-class Robert, their habits affected their view on the diminution of meat availability. While Robert and his family had to manage on their rations only, Norma improved greatly their ration with venison and games from their estate. Nonetheless, despite such additional meat, she commented on the household management difficulties induced by meat rationing more than Robert (in charge of most of the household shopping) who, even if making occasional remarks, did not complain extensively about it, indicating either a lesser pre-war consumption and

⁴¹⁴ MOA D 5239, April 1941.

⁴¹⁵ MOA D 5390, September 1941.

⁴¹⁶ See for instance: Nelson, "Social-Class Trends in British Diet"; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 44.

consequently a less important modification of their habits, or a better adaptation to the situation.

However, adaptation could be challenging and providing the usual dishes was another issue regularly commented on by the diarists, once again in relation with their pre-war habits but also their family status. While Robert's wife or Clara struggled with milky puddings for the children, Celia tried to bake scones and tarts for tea with her husband. Whatever kind of dishes they sought to provide, food restrictions and scarcity were a nuisance for housewives who had to prepare daily family meals.⁴¹⁷ However, despite the degradation of their diet and various remarks made about losing weight (indicating a decrease of calorie intake), hunger was not commonly reported by the diarists.⁴¹⁸ The exception was Amelia, the only diarist specifically mentioning and reporting comments about hunger in December 1940: 'Feeling so hungry that I imagined myself weak. I went to the pictures to save walking about as well as to forget my hunger.'⁴¹⁹ Her family, friends and colleagues are said to complain about not having enough to eat. Teaching was made difficult as both teachers and pupils were hungry or unsatisfied because they could not get their usual food.⁴²⁰ Her sister reported grumblings about shopping and predicted 'riots of these semi-hungry women who have husband requiring backed meals'.⁴²¹ The food difficulties provoked tension between sisters, complaining about feeling hungry; wearied by shopping and queuing, tired out by fire watching and 'absolutely fed up with the war'.⁴²²

While these comments are unsurprisingly echoed by others on the subject of fancied food, frustration and the female burden of the wartime food management, the lack of

⁴¹⁷ MOA D 5239, August 1941; MOA DR 2903, April 1943.

⁴¹⁸ It must be said that except for Lillian whose lost of weigh was drastic and unhealthy and for Edna who put on weigh because of an increase of starchy food intake, the other diarists who reported a lost of weigh did not complaint about it, rather the opposite.

⁴¹⁹ MOA D 5240, December 1940.

⁴²⁰ MOA D 5240, May, June 1941.

⁴²¹ MOA D 5240, May 1941.

⁴²² MOA D 5240, June 1941.

significant mentions about feeling or being hungry by other diarists was unexpected, especially as many reported a loss of weight. Undoubtedly, the diarists compensated with starchy food, but their occupation and gender are factors to be taken into account. According to Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, in contrast with male heavy workers resenting the decrease of meat, bacon and cheese consumption, white-collar workers and housewives showed less dissatisfaction concerning their wartime diet and its adequacy.⁴²³ Time is another point to consider. Amelia did not write about hunger after 1941, indicating an improvement of the food situation, an adaptation to the new regime, or both. However, a sense of monotony and being 'sick and tired' of vegetables is increasingly perceptible in her writing and those of most of the diarists.⁴²⁴

The account of the 'wartime diet experience', followed for a week by historian Peter Hennessy reflects the narratives of the diarists, summarised by Edna: 'Under food control and rationing we get plenty of nourishing food and there is no question of hunger', she wrote in summer 1941, 'The hardship lies in the monotony'.⁴²⁵ Despite losing two pounds in a week, attesting to a decrease of calorie intake, Hennessy states that he rarely felt hungry as he 'filled up' with bread and potatoes, recognising that the wartime diet was by no means exciting.⁴²⁶ If a single week of such a diet was already tedious, no wonder that the diarists had subjects to complaint about after years of food restrictions and shortages.

Interestingly, while complaints about the quantity, quality and variety of commodities available are noticeable, the administration of the food situation was not a great source of criticism. Reinforcing the view of a social divergence of opinion, the two exceptions are the upper-middle class Irene and the middle-middle class Celia, who expressed openly their dissatisfaction. Irene, for instance, blamed the Government failure to supply chicken foodstuff for the shortage of eggs.⁴²⁷ As for Celia, she was very clear on her judgement on

⁴²³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 75–6.

⁴²⁴ MOA D 5240, December 1941.

⁴²⁵ MOA D 5390, July 1941.

⁴²⁶ Hennessy, Peter. *Never Again : Britain 1945-51*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1992, 50.

⁴²⁷ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

Lord Woolton's propaganda and his management of the wartime food supply, as demonstrated by these two comments written in September 1941:

What a marvellous discovery Lord Woolton has made! We are the only nation eating more bread now than before the war. Of course we are. There's not much else to eat – no eggs, no tomatoes, no fruits, little cheese, less jam.⁴²⁸

Lord Woolton is trying again to make us believe that eggs aren't a necessary food. What does he live on? We can't make anything without eggs – no puddings, no cakes, no Welsh rarebit (if we had cheese).⁴²⁹

Her remarks reflect her irritation as well as her difficulties. Again, such comments were predominantly made in 1941 and diminish after 1942, indicating an improvement and/or an adaptation to the wartime conditions over time. However, even if less discussed, food issues remained significant in the diaries. Food was a great concern for Edna during the whole war, as indicated by an observation made in April 1943, revealing that improvement, if any, was maybe limited and temporary:

Our standards of feeding could be pressed lower, and I am afraid it is not impossible that they will be pressed lower still, but the fact remains that it is now got down the level that before the war one would have called not very much.⁴³⁰

Her concerns about food availability were not only related to rationing and shortages, as shopping hours and increasing prices were problematic as well.

Difficulties in Getting Food: Shopping

Getting food, queuing, often repetitively in various shops, was time consuming for women, who were predominantly in charge of food purchase and preparation. As written by Edna, reporting a neighbour: 'queues are better than fight, but they are not fair for the reason that they favour people with leisure at the expense of people with long hours and

⁴²⁸ MOA D 5423, September 1941.

⁴²⁹ MOA D 5423, September 1941.

⁴³⁰ MOA D 5390, April 1943.

probably heavy work'.⁴³¹ Indeed, for those who could not spend hours waiting for their turn or hunting commodities all over the place, food acquisition was a major issue. Most commodities were already gone after working hours. Shopping had to be done on the way to work, during lunch break or while taking off working time, adding stress to a long working day.⁴³² Working diarists such as Edna or Lillian discussed regularly their struggles to get food, the recurrent problems of distribution, the inadequate shops opening hours, as well as the commodities reserved for registered customers.⁴³³ In April 1943 Edna summarised the double burden of working and being in charge of the household:

Where the housekeeper has the time to hunt and to queue, the money to lay out and the skills and the patience to use what is brought to the best advantage, then no doubt the family will not feel it. [...] Miss F. stands two afternoons a week for fish, but how many could spare that time [...] asparagus at 10/- a bunch, but how many could afford that?⁴³⁴

Occasionally, efforts were made to support these women. Penny Summerfield describes a system of membership registration implemented by some retailers in order to allow women to order and the food to be delivered or collected as convenient. However, these unofficial schemes were based on a private basis, letting the customers at the mercy of the retailers' willingness. In addition, such schemes were mainly reserved to essential workers, especially those in munitions factories.⁴³⁵ In consequence none of the diarists would have benefited from such arrangements. It is not certain that they were even aware of such schemes as they did not mention it and those working recounted doing their shopping when they could. According to Clara, however, it was not easier for those having young children and no support. On various occasions she complained about her

⁴³¹ MOA D 5390, July 1941.

⁴³² Braybon, Gail, and Penny Summerfield. *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*. London; New York: Pandora Press, 1987, 243–44; Summerfield, *Women Workers*, 1984, 99, 105; Mackay, *The Test of War*, 1999, 179.

⁴³³ MOA D 5390, November, December 1940, March, June, July, August, October, December 1941, October 1942; MOA D 5239, March 1941.

⁴³⁴ MOA D 5390, April 1943.

⁴³⁵ Summerfield, *Women Workers*, 1984, 108–9.

difficulties, in comparison to those who can ‘go scouting round the shops and standing the queues’, of getting any scarce food.⁴³⁶ In March 1942 she wrote:

It seems that at the moment the women without children benefit all around. They can take part-time jobs, get meals out, and be twice as well off as they were before the war. It makes one think that it is time family allowance came into being.⁴³⁷

Her comment not only reflects her feeling about being left alone to manage her kitchen front, but also reveals a main issue shared by all the diarists: the wartime costs of living and the increase of food expenses.

Difficulties of Getting Food: Price

Even if inflation did not reach the same level than during the Great War, the costs of living during the Second World War increased significantly, especially between 1939 and 1941 (circa 30%).⁴³⁸ As for the costs of food, they increased one and a half times between 1936 and 1941 according to the Oxford Institute of Statistics.⁴³⁹ Regarding the diarists (and verifying the statistics) the price augmentation was especially remarked at the beginning of the war. The number of related observations made by Amelia is eloquent:

Figure 50: Number of mentions of prices, diary 5240 Amelia

1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
3	24	5	2	0	1	0

Robert and his wife struggled with their household budget as well, feeling the wartime rise of food expenses in their diet: ‘The point that strikes me’, he wrote in May 1941, ‘is that we are eating a lot less meat than pre-war yet we are spending more. That’s the weakness of rationing on a value basis.’⁴⁴⁰ The food practices of Robert’s family were not only influenced by the availability of their usual commodities, but by their financial

⁴³⁶ MOA D 5318.1, April 1941.

⁴³⁷ MOA D 5318.1, March 1942.

⁴³⁸ See Fig. 1.1 UK costs of living 1938-1955 Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 36–37.

⁴³⁹ Schulz, T. “Human Needs Diets from 1936 to 1949.” Institut of Statistics Oxford, 11 (1949), 324.

⁴⁴⁰ MOA D 5201, May 1941.

capacity. Tomatoes, for example, were difficult to find and therefore much looked for. However, their acquisition was subject to limits: 'On my way to work spot a shop with tomatoes in the window, dash back thinking, "what a treat for L. [his wife]" – 5/6 a pound!! L. gets none'''.⁴⁴¹

The issue of tomatoes should have been resolved by the governmental fixed price, but a shortage resulted from lack of profit as well as production and reduced importation. In June 1941, Robert noticed that, while plenty of expensive tomatoes were available, they disappeared as soon as their price went under control.⁴⁴² Such mercantile behaviour, as well as others such as favouritism, was angrily noticed in the diaries, indicating the limit of the wartime system of distribution, the persistence of social inequalities as well as the weight of the human feeling in the perception of a situation.

Unfairness of Distribution

The equality of the wartime distribution, the 'fair shares for all' defended by the Government, has been debated and the exaggeration of its achievement established. The higher wartime purchasing power of the better off is recognised and the problem of eating out or buying unrationed goods is an eloquent example of the wartime social class tensions.⁴⁴³ The question of unfair distribution has been discussed, usually picturing the discontentment of the underprivileged.⁴⁴⁴ According to the account of the two wealthier diarists, being economically more fortunate did not reduce the dissatisfaction regarding unfairness, demonstrating that jealousy could be more powerful than scarcity when it came to putting a challenging situation in perspective.

Indeed, Irene and Celia could have strong reactions to a real or perceived inequality of distribution. While the other diarists expressed discontentment about favouritism in shops and the distribution of scarce commodities, reflecting the general grievances

⁴⁴¹ MOA D 5201, May 1941.

⁴⁴² MOA D 5201, June 1941.

⁴⁴³ Smith, *War and Social Change*, 9.

⁴⁴⁴ Smith, *War and Social Change*, 1986, 48.

recounted by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, the complaints of Irene and Celia were more often related to neighbours or acquaintances.⁴⁴⁵ Irene, for instance, resented greatly being unable to obtain desired commodities that her friends could get.⁴⁴⁶ Having to manage with her ration of milk when surplus was distributed in other districts provoked her indignation, aggravated by her belief that it resulted from bribing the milkman.⁴⁴⁷ Her exasperation was even worse when the shortage concerned commodities supported by the Government propaganda. The shortage of oats, for instance, was a source of anger because it was 'one of the few commodities which are supposed to be plentiful and which the Food Ministry is forever urging to make more use'.⁴⁴⁸ In 1942, she expressed an unusual perspective on the matter, indicating that even at her social level it was possible to find reason to complain about unequal wartime sacrifice: 'I should accept governmental exhortations more willingly,' she stated, 'if Churchill and Bevin were getting any less obese.'⁴⁴⁹

Celia, like Irene, had issues with privileged milk distribution (she believed 'native Heatonian' were privileged by the milkman).⁴⁵⁰ In 1943 milk was the reason of all her complaints. She recriminated against those getting off-ration milk in canteens, schools or restaurants.⁴⁵¹ She resented the reduced milk ration, especially when other people got more, or the fact that others got commodities she couldn't.⁴⁵² Paradoxically, she mostly complained about those who, like Irene, ate regularly off-ration in restaurants while she had to manage on their allowances only.⁴⁵³ Doing so, she echoed a main source of discontentment within the population, despite a comfortable income and most likely the

⁴⁴⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 70–1, 77.

⁴⁴⁶ MOA D 5427, April 1941.

⁴⁴⁷ MOA D 5427, April 1941, November 1942.

⁴⁴⁸ MOA D 5427, June 1941.

⁴⁴⁹ MOA D 5427, March 1942.

⁴⁵⁰ MOA D 5423, December 1942.

⁴⁵¹ MOA D 5423, November 1942.

⁴⁵² MOA D 5423, May, December 1942, January, November 1943.

⁴⁵³ In the Directive reply of April 1943 she states that they always eat at home, except for her husband's monthly Masonic dinner "MOA DR 2903" April 1943.

financial possibility to eat out.⁴⁵⁴ Celia also complained about the unfairness of supply or price between cities or coastal areas in comparison with her inland districts, and gave a detailed account of all the commodities people in Scotland were able to buy while she couldn't in Yorkshire (commenting that it looked like bribery and corruption).⁴⁵⁵ Such vision is exceptional in the diaries. However, the problem of regional differences of food availability was not uncommon. For instance, Edna and Norma (the only diarist who did not really complain about unfairness, maybe because such inequality was in her favour due to her social position) also mentioned geographical variation of food distribution.⁴⁵⁶

The reactions of Irene and Celia could be related to a feeling of entitlement, resentment against a Government unable to prevent unjust distribution, or simply a jealousy that did not take into account their own privileges.⁴⁵⁷ Such a level of introspection is not present in their diaries, therefore one can only speculate.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to present the diarists and the narration of their wartime food experience. In addition, it sought to expose the various dimensions affecting such experiences, perspectives and narrations. The question of gender difference and similitude could not be properly discussed due to a single male diarist only in the group studied. However, according to the analysis, the professional and familial statuses, as well as the social class, are the major element to be taken into account, in contrast with the factor age, which does not seem to have a great influence. The factor of time, on the other hand, proved to be of importance regarding the understanding of the evolution of priorities, another main feature of this study.

⁴⁵⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 78–9.

⁴⁵⁵ MOA D 5423, October, November, December 1941, May 1942.

⁴⁵⁶ MOA D 5390, March 1941, January, July 1942; MOA D 5378, January 1941.

⁴⁵⁷ Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 197–202.

The individual examination of these eight civilians offers an insight into their own stories, backgrounds, social classes and familial situations. The definition of their priorities and particularities offers some key of understanding as regards to their perspectives and responses to the challenge put on their pre-war diet pattern. The group analysis confirmed the trend perceived individually, highlighting both the tension between personal and war concerns and the significance of the time passing on these concerns. The mixed analysis demonstrated similarities and disparities in the narratives, as well as the influence of the personal dynamic. The main war events were discussed by mostly all diarists, however, the degree of their comments depended on the direct impact of such events on their lives as the diarists noticeably focused more on their personal and familial lives than on the total war. The mentions about food followed the same pattern of priorities related to personal effects and perspectives, mainly related to individual eating habits, tastes, financial position or familial obligation. While the diarists faced the same rationing and, even with geographical variation, comparable shortages, their concerns and reactions varied according to their needs and pre-war habits. The analysis of the complaints related to food clearly shows common issues and differentiations related to social class or professional and familial status. According to the results, the place within the social class categories had a significant influence on the diarists' change of habits, perspectives and behaviour. In contrast, the mentioning of food non-related items was less predominant. In consequence, it can be said that, while the kitchen front seems representative of social class divisions on many points, the home front has more shared priorities, despite social differences.

The study of the diaries confirmed the existence of major factors of influence concerning the diarists' wartime food experience and its perception. These factors, that is scarcity, time, social class and familial status and their impact on the food practices of the diarists, are the fundamental elements of this research and will be discussed in the following and last part of this thesis.

Chapter III

Wartime Food Practices: Factors of Influence

Chapter III: Wartime Food Practices: Factors of Influence

This final chapter discusses the main factors that influenced the food practices of the diarists (and most likely a majority of the population). In contrast to the section introducing the diarists that presents the most similar or divergent wartime experiences related to food, such as shopping difficulties or the quite subjective perception of unfair distribution (not to be confused with the tangible insufficiency of food), this chapter offers a multidisciplinary analysis of four dimensions that influenced the diarists' food practices, namely scarcity of food, social class, familial status and time, and puts the narratives into a larger context in relation to other primary sources as well as publications on the British home front experience.⁴⁵⁸

These factors are closely interconnected and difficult to separate, so there is a perceptible interweaving in their analysis. Nonetheless, this part has been divided according to the themes named above. It starts with a central dimension of the kitchen front, scarcity of food, which not only modified the diet of the diarists, but also their food practices and their perspectives. It follows with a key determinant of food habits, taste and choice, that is social class, then tackles the familial status of the diarists, which affected their priorities and behaviours. The fourth factor, time, offers a longitudinal study of changes and continuities. Regarding the diarists, its impact was of primary importance, but also complex to measure, because it is not always clearly visible. In addition, time is intimately interrelated to the other factors. Therefore it is the last aspect to be discussed as various dimensions can be associated in its analysis.

⁴⁵⁸ As previously explained, a gendered approach would be inadequate, due to the unbalanced ration of male and female diarists and, according to the analysis of the testimonies, age did not emerged as a significant factor of influence.

1. Scarcity of Food: Desire, Value and Behaviours

*I get along without sugar
I never drink tea
Eggs and bacon, even ham... ha-ha
These things don't worry me [...]
But one thing I always crave
And that why you hear me sing:
'When can I have a banana again?'
Oh tell me !
Harry Roy
'When Can I have a Banana Again?'
(1943)*

In a verse and a refrain, jazz singer Harry Roy summarised the food situation faced by the British home front reflecting, in a parody, the current public opinion.⁴⁵⁹ While bacon, ham and eggs were rationed, bananas, like many other imported commodities, just disappeared and were, apparently, greatly missed.⁴⁶⁰

This section aims to demonstrate that the scarcity of food modified its value and its role, as well as the actions and perspectives of the diarists. As asserted by Gazeley and Wilt and confirmed by the diarists, the wartime diet was generally monotonous and insipid, but nutritionally adequate.⁴⁶¹ On a more detailed level, the restrictions and disappearance of many commodities became an issue, particularly during the first years of the war. According to the testimonies analysed, providing tasty meals became a headache as cooking demanded more time and creativity, while shopping felt more like hunting.⁴⁶² In addition, food scarcity and its impact on everyday life and diet had consequences for the health and the morale of the diarists.

⁴⁵⁹ Murdoch, Brian. *Fighting Songs and Warring Words: Popular Lyrics of Two World Wars*. London; New York: Routledge, 1990, 187.

⁴⁶⁰ Hammond, *Food*, 161.

⁴⁶¹ Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain*, 138; Wilt, *Food for War*, 226–7.

⁴⁶² Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 97.

Change of behaviours and perspectives

The account of trivial details reveals the omnipresence of rationing in the minds of the diarists. For instance, when learning that she would join her husband in London, Lillian wrote: 'my first reaction was to make some well buttered toast so I finish my ration before I leave!'⁴⁶³ This wartime-induced thrifty approach is also visible in the ersatz of marmalade Irene made with oranges peels ('pleasant but tasteless compared with the real stuff').⁴⁶⁴ The scale of appreciation was influenced too. Baking with jam and syrup, something insignificant in peacetime, was now qualified as extravagance.⁴⁶⁵ Food scarcity also provoked unusual reactions. Echoing Harry Roy's song about bananas, the following story recounted by Amelia demonstrates that, after four years of shortage, a sudden reappearance of exotic commodities did not go unnoticed:

A boy brought a banana wrapped in a handkerchief. A sailor had come home with a bunch, and had given one to all the children in the street. I took it round to all the staff and said "Prepare for a shock!", and was rewarded with gasps of amazement, and almost unbelief. The "head" held it up, and showed the whole school, like a curiosity.⁴⁶⁶

These examples are not much more than anecdotes. Nonetheless, altogether, they indicate a growing appreciation of the value of food. This value was material, but also emotional. The Government believed that food played a major role in the maintenance of morale. The stabilisation of food distribution since 1942 was considered to be greatly responsible for the positive mood of the population. The post-war spirit of disheartenment resulting from the maintenance and even extension of rationing is more evidence of the crucial role played by food on morale.⁴⁶⁷

This new value is also perceptible in the expression of contentment regarding food that was unlikely to exist prior to the wartime difficulties.

⁴⁶³ MOA D 5239 December 1942.

⁴⁶⁴ MOA D 5427, November 1941.

⁴⁶⁵ MOA D 5239, July 1941.

⁴⁶⁶ MOA D 5240, June 1943.

⁴⁶⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 63–65.

Changes of value

Indeed, it seems improbable that before the war, Irene would have felt 'happy' because of having pork for lunch or because the Sunday roast beef joint would be enough for leftovers. However, she expressed that feeling and various others regarding her household food supply during the war. Her degree of appreciation was tinged by her social status though, as denoted by the comparison with other diarists. There is a major difference between this upper-class woman feeling 'millionaire-ish' after finding continental sausages, spaghetti, onion salt or grated cheese, and working-class Robert, describing a half pound of suet as 'a luxury'.⁴⁶⁸ Nevertheless, each one showed an unusual contentment related to the scarcity of ingredients. A sentiment of achievement could be expressed too, such as Lillian feeling pleased when she managed to buy something she desired.⁴⁶⁹ Still, financial resources definitely made a difference. While Edna could not afford fish any more, Irene, despite complaining about its price, was 'grateful to get some at all'. In contrast with other diarists who would have welcomed controlled prices, Irene was worried about such regulation as it would have weakened her financial advantage.⁴⁷⁰ Her reaction illustrates the tension regarding the social inequality of sacrifice, but from the point of view of the better off.⁴⁷¹ Nonetheless her mention of feeling 'grateful' to get an otherwise common commodity illustrates her particular wartime sensitivity. This new perception of food was expressed by other diarists. 'The war has certainly made us appreciate [...] good food when we can have it in abundance', wrote Lillian.⁴⁷² Robert described the evolution of their wartime perspective as well:

We've learning a lot about shopping since outbreak of war. At first if a particular commodity became scarce we'd go trying and trying to get it, but now we try one shop, if it's out of stock we just manage without it. Actually one gets a pleasant surprise when a scarce commodity suddenly turns up for a while.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁸ MOA D 5427, March, April 1941; "MOA D 5201," n.d. April 1941.

⁴⁶⁹ MOA D 5239, October 1941.

⁴⁷⁰ MOA D 5427, May 1941.

⁴⁷¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 78–9.

⁴⁷² MOA D 5239, January 1942.

⁴⁷³ MOA D 5201, November 1941.

Scarcity diminished food fussiness and increased its desirability. While Norma qualified as ‘marvellous’ sweets she wouldn’t have normally considered, Edna observed a new tolerance for food she would have found ‘indignant’ before the war, observing that in wartime ‘one must take what one can get’.⁴⁷⁴ On the other hand, craving for ‘something sweet’, chocolate in particular, was common. Irene explained this new desire by the decrease of other sweets available, but also because of the ‘luxury value that scarcity always confers’, reflecting what consumer psychologist Michael Lynn calls ‘the scarcity effects’.⁴⁷⁵ As established by research in social psychology, economics or marketing, scarcity increases desirability, especially if this scarcity results from a change, is a novelty, and combines limited supply and popularity.⁴⁷⁶ These three dimensions are clearly noticeable in the diaries, supporting Irene’s feeling that rarity exacerbated her desire. This rarity had another consequence: food became a respectable and much-appreciated present, as well as an object for illegal trade.

Gift of Food

The gift of food (or surplus of coupons) was widespread in a population that seemed not really aware, or concerned, by the fact that such practices were illicit (pooling within the household was ‘tolerated’ but any giving of coupons, rationed or non-rationed food, as well as home-grown or home-made produce, was prohibited). The reminder from the Ministry of Food that a gift of coupons or rationed food was illegal (except for sweets) in November 1942 was a surprise for most. The indignant reaction of the public obligated the Ministry to compromise. The regulations remained, as did the gifts and exchanges,

⁴⁷⁴ MOA D 5378, April 1941, September 1942; MOA D 5390, September 1942.

⁴⁷⁵ MOA D 5427, February 1941; Lynn, Michael. “Scarcity Effects on Desirability: Mediated by Assumed Expensiveness?” *Journal of Economic Psychology* 10, no. 2 (1989): 257–74; Lynn, Michael. “Scarcity Effects on Value: A Quantitative Review of the Commodity Theory Literature.” *Psychology & Marketing* 8, no. 1 (1991): 43–57; Lynn, Michael. “The Psychology of Unavailability: Explaining Scarcity and Cost Effects on Value.” *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 13, no. 1 (1992): 3–7.

⁴⁷⁶ Worchel, Stephen Lee, Jerry, Adewole, Akanbi. “Effects of Supply and Demand on Ratings of Object Value.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, no. 5 (1975), 906;910; Verhallen, T.M.M, and H Robben. Scarcity and Preference: An Experiment on Unavailability and Product Evaluation, *Journal of Economic Psychology* 15, no2 (1994): 315-331.

demonstrating the limits of Government power over individuals' practices, and a tendency to ignore rules that intuitively made no sense.⁴⁷⁷

As for the diarists, none mentioned or showed any awareness of such a directive. Receiving or giving food, whether a gift or sharing of surplus, was recounted candidly by all of them.⁴⁷⁸ The eggs, margarine, fruits, pastries and so on received from family, friends or neighbours were most appreciated.⁴⁷⁹ Such gifts could have diverse motivations. For example, Irene sent cheese to a friend because she disliked it. Nonetheless, she made the effort to pack and post it, demonstrating her friendliness.⁴⁸⁰ Affectionate presents of food are very present in the various sources examined. For example, a favourite dish for her son's birthday, a Swiss roll given as birthday present by a friend, a grandmother giving her eggs and sweets to her grandchildren.⁴⁸¹

Although such practices were not a wartime novelty, their significance in the narratives indicates the new value food could have at a time of sacrifice. The financial means of the diarists is noticeable concerning these gifts and the level of sacrifice they involved, as illustrated by the comparison between Norma (upper class) and Robert (working class). Norma regularly gave food to family and friends or even visitors.⁴⁸² This included vegetables and fruits from the farm, but also olive oil, tinned foods and meat shared from hunting.⁴⁸³ On the other hand, Robert and his wife used their eggs as special gifts, for the birth of the first child of a friend or for Christmas, for instance.⁴⁸⁴ Eggs can seem a modest

⁴⁷⁷ Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 39, 51–54.

⁴⁷⁸ MOA D 5239, April 1941, July 1942; MOA D 5240, March, April 1941.

⁴⁷⁹ MOA D 5427, November 1940; MOA D 5239, January, July, August 1941, August 1942, August 1943, January 1944, March 1945; MOA D 5239, August 1943, January, February, December 1944.

⁴⁸⁰ MOA D 5427, November 1942.

⁴⁸¹ Last, Nella. *Nella Last's War : The Second World War Diaries of "Housewife, 49."* London: Profile Books, 2006, 59; MOA D 5390, March 1941; MOA D 5201, August 1941.

⁴⁸² MOA D 5378, December 1940, January, February, November 1941, May, September 1942, January, May 1943, March 1944.

⁴⁸³ MOA D 5378, December 1943; MOA D 5378, January 1941, January 1943

⁴⁸⁴ He received from his mates a "very pleasant gift of several toilet soaps, some cigarettes and a pot of marmalade". A significant present too: between sugar rationing and the quasi disappearance of oranges, marmalade was quite a luxury. MOA D 5201, January, December 1942.

present, but it was noteworthy for this family financially struggling. Their 'precious eggs' as Robert put it, were perhaps the only valuable item they had to offer.⁴⁸⁵

This variation of quantity and worth is eloquent of the disparity of resources between the diarists, but also of their evaluations of a commodity, confirming the major influence of social class on an individual's standards. The food given by Norma, for example, reflects the practices described by Felicity Heal in *Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England*.⁴⁸⁶ The social relationship between the aristocrat offering food from her estate to socially inferior recipients, more in need and unable to reciprocate, indicating maybe the survival of the 'claim to status' described by Heal in her unique historical study of the gift of food and its symbolism.⁴⁸⁷

Very few works have been conducted by historians on the topic of gifts, and even less on gifts of food.⁴⁸⁸ In contrast, these topics have been extensively studied in sociology, anthropology, and social psychology as well as in economics and philosophy.⁴⁸⁹ The discussions and debates about the conceptualisations of the gift, developed by anthropologist and sociologist Bronislaw Malinowski and Marcel Mauss, resulted in a framework of theories from the utilitarian perspective (which motive is pure self-interest) to the free gift (made with no strings attached).⁴⁹⁰ Gifts and gift-giving have been related

⁴⁸⁵ MOA D 5201 January 1942; MOA D5201 March 1942; MOA D5201 May 1941

⁴⁸⁶ A study of the cultural history gift giving in America has been done by William Waits, while Harry Liebersohn published a book about the history of the perception of gift in Modern Europe. Waits, William Burnell. *The Modern Christmas in America: A Cultural History of Gift Giving*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.; Liebersohn, Harry. *The Return of the Gift: European History of a Global Idea*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

⁴⁸⁷ Heal Felicity. "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England." *Past and Present* 199, no. 1 (2008), 55.

⁴⁸⁸ A study tackling specifically the gift of food in Early England has been done by Felicity Heal, who demonstrated the social and symbolic importance of food gift as well as its decline and marginalisation at the end of the seventeenth century Heal F, "Food Gifts"; For gift and MOA see: Purbrick, Louise. *The Wedding Present: Domestic Life Beyond Consumption*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

⁴⁸⁹ Miczo, Nathan. "The Human Condition and the Gift: Towards a Theoretical Perspective on Close Relationships." *Human Studies* 31, no. 2 (2008), 147.

⁴⁹⁰ See Adloff, Frank. "Beyond Interests and Norms: Toward a Theory of Gift-Giving and Reciprocity in Modern Societies." *Constellations* 13, no. 3 (2006): 407–27; Laidlaw, James Alexander. "A Free Gift Makes No Friends." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute : Incorporating "Man,"* 2000.

to the creation and maintenance of social obligations through the notion of reciprocity, as well as a representation of identity.⁴⁹¹ Their social, economical and personal dimensions have been studied, as was the question of its monetary or symbolic value.⁴⁹² 'Gifts are tangible expression of social relationship,' claims John Sherry, adding that 'the value of the gift partially reflects the weight of the relationship'. A good example would be Lillian and her husband James, as food became 'the tangible and valuable expression of their love'.⁴⁹³

'James came home today, bringing me a present of a piece of Cheshire cheese and a small onion' wrote Lillian in October 1941, revealing the romantic dimension scarce commodities took in their life.⁴⁹⁴ They commemorated their first anniversary with their only tin of fruit, and Lillian endeavoured to prepare James' favourite meals before his departure for the Army.⁴⁹⁵ Their last breakfast together was made of eggs and bacon she reserved especially for the occasion, as due to rationing this combination had become a rarity.⁴⁹⁶ In the same spirit, after his enlistment, James expressed his love not only with letters and words, but with parcels of sugar, syrup, dried fruits, sweets and even tinned butter from India where he was based.⁴⁹⁷ His presents were greatly appreciated, not because of their nutritional value (Lillian often shared the food with her in-laws) but for their emotional value. They helped her to cope with loneliness and depressed mood. Naturally, their love was not expressed only through presents of food, but the emphasis given to these gifts and the precise descriptions of the parcels' contents reveal their significance.

⁴⁹¹ Adloff, "Beyond Interests and Norms," 413; Schwartz, Barry. "The Social Psychology of the Gift." *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 1 (1967).

⁴⁹² Sherry, John F. "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective." *Journal of Consumer Research* 10, no. 2 (1983), 158–9.

⁴⁹³ Sherry, "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," 158.

⁴⁹⁴ MOA D 5239, October 1941

⁴⁹⁵ MOA D 5239, January 1942

⁴⁹⁶ MOA D 5239, February, October, December 1942.

⁴⁹⁷ MOA D 5239 October 1943, February 1944, December 1944

Except for Lillian and her husband, the gifts of food presented in the diaries were mostly positioned between the concepts of free gift and utilitarian reciprocity.⁴⁹⁸ Replacing the usual pre-war presents, food was offered for Christmas or birthdays and consequently related to a social ritual and a way to preserve a form of normality.⁴⁹⁹ However, most of the other gifts related to an exchange of a sort. The symbolism of gifts was especially noticeable when it was refused. The refusal could be dictated by love, entering the family relationship of mutual caring and sharing, as when Robert forced her mother to accept food or money in exchange for eggs.⁵⁰⁰ However, it is obvious in the diaries that transforming a gift into an exchange was also a sign of pride or independence, and a means to avoid feeling inferior as 'failure to reciprocate can result in an asymmetrical relationship,' to quote Sherry.⁵⁰¹ When Robert's sisters-in-law came for tea with her Canadian soldier boyfriend bringing tea, cakes, and cheese for the second time, Robert and his wife reciprocated with vegetables.⁵⁰² A month later, when friends came for tea, bringing food, they reciprocated with products from their garden as well.⁵⁰³ As for Norma, she faced a strong rejection from a neighbour who accepted eggs only in exchange for herrings.⁵⁰⁴

The closeness of the relationship is noticeable in the meaning and importance of the gift of food. 'Reciprocity is related to the extent of social interaction between donor and recipients,' say Garner and Wagner, and the closer the receiver, the freer would be the gift, as demonstrated in the diagram below:

⁴⁹⁸ See Adloff, "Beyond Interests and Norms."

⁴⁹⁹ Sherry, "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," 162; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 61.

⁵⁰⁰ Adloff, "Beyond Interests and Norms," 419; MOA D 5201, February, May, June 1941, April 1942.

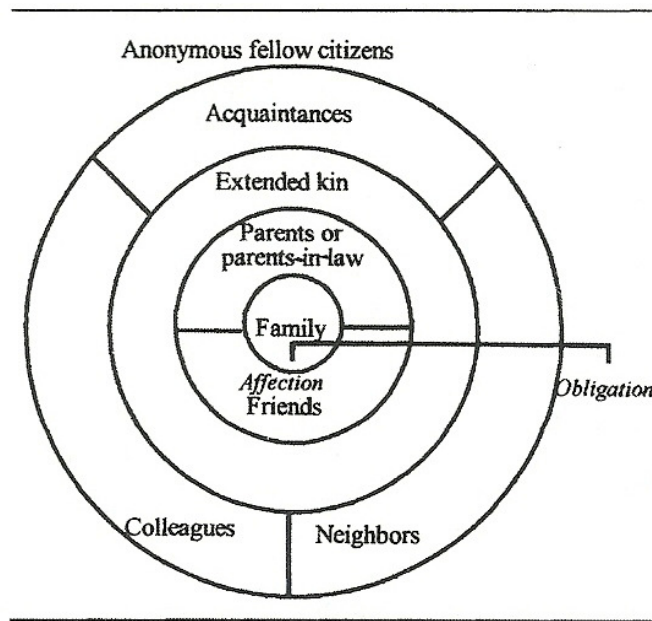
⁵⁰¹ Sherry, "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," 159.

⁵⁰² MOA D 5201, September 1942.

⁵⁰³ MOA D 5201, October 1942.

⁵⁰⁴ MOA D 5378, February 1942.

Figure 51: Feelings underlying kinship and social relations in Western societies



Source: Komter and Vollebergh, 'Gift Giving and the Emotional Significance of Family and Friends', p. 750

Verifying the diagram and supporting the claim of Smith that wartime 'social solidarity should not be overstated', the testimonies show the existence of mutual assistance within family, close relatives or friends and a more detached approach to others.⁵⁰⁵ Additionally, personal feelings should not be underestimated concerning a potential support. The comment made by Celia about a London neighbour is representative of personal issues, whether social or geographical:

She always thinks she should have preference of treatment – why? She is coming round moaning to all her friends begging for dried milk. [...] I am maliciously amused at my neighbour's exasperation because with all her southern superiority she can't "wangle" any extra.⁵⁰⁶

Another comment made a few months later indicates that favouritism, real or imaginary, was a source of tensions and gossips in her neighbourhood as well: 'There is wild tales floating round of how Ms. X can get a good supply [of milk] because her husband is a

⁵⁰⁵ See discussion in Introduction. Smith, *War and Social Change*, 1–2.

⁵⁰⁶ MOA D 5423, November 1943.

dentist, and has supplied the milkman with a free set of teeth'.⁵⁰⁷ Such reactions corroborate the affirmation of Mark Roodhouse that although the middle-class network was reinforced through mutual assistance during the war, those who did not belong (because of social status and, in Celia's case, regional enmity) expressed jealousy through their strong disapproval.⁵⁰⁸

This exacerbation of pre-existing resentment is not the only impact shortage of food had on the diarists' relationships. Scarcity also affected generosity and hospitality.

Hospitality

Receiving guests is of significance as commensality relates to the construction and maintenance of family and social affiliation.⁵⁰⁹ It is also an opportunity to share news, intimacy, to integrate new members into the group and to cultivate, usually in a pleasant manner, a sense of belonging and unity.⁵¹⁰ Therefore sharing a meal can be a source of well-being resulting from the emotional support and the protective effect of social integration, as discussed by psychologist Sheldon Cohen.⁵¹¹ Unfortunately, such a positive outcome could be ruined by stressful circumstances. In wartime, such pleasure was moderated by the question of food. Having guests became a problem and demanded creativity in the kitchen.⁵¹²

The insufficiency of food and drink influenced the behaviours of hosts and guests and modified pre-war social habits. As pointed out by Philip Zeigler, private parties in London became rare and even outmoded due to the supplies difficulties. Norma used to have parties in London prior to the war and maintained a semblance of social gathering in

⁵⁰⁷ "MOA D 5423, November 1943.

⁵⁰⁸ Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 72.

⁵⁰⁹ Counihan, Carol. "The Social and Cultural Uses of Food." In *The Cambridge World History of Food*, Kenneth F. Kiple and Ornelas Kriemhild Conee eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, Accessed 18 July 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521402156.041>, 1513–20; Julier, "Meals" 339.

⁵¹⁰ Valentine, Gill. "Eating In: Home, Consumption and Identity." *Sociological Review* 47, no. 3 (1999), 493.

⁵¹¹ See Cohen, Sheldon. "Social Relationships and Health." *American Psychologist* 59, no. 8 (2004).

⁵¹² MOA D 5318.1, August 1941.

Scotland. The wartime food situation impacted significantly on her hospitality though, as demonstrated by her choice to offer drinks and not tea to her guests in order to spare her sugar (Amelia suggested that visitors should have saccharine for the same reason).⁵¹³ The kind of food and its quantity offered would now depend on the household situation, as illustrated by Lillian letting her husband serve a whole joint for supper with a friend, only because he would be away the next two days, sparing their rations.⁵¹⁴ It is also doubtful that Norma would normally have served sausages, potatoes and cabbage to her visitors, or that the guests would bring their own food with them.⁵¹⁵ However, such things became quite common according to the evidence given by the diarists, even for those with plentiful financial means. Norma related various parties with guests bringing bread and beer, or sugar, tea and margarine.⁵¹⁶ Amelia, Lillian and Robert wrote about such practices as well.⁵¹⁷ The pressure of the scarcity of food on hospitality is perceptible in the feeling of relief expressed when guests came with food, or the account of a family meal of thirteen people, each one having brought its meat ration.⁵¹⁸

This new concern provoked new complaints, interestingly especially from Norma and Irene, despite being privileged. Norma repeatedly grumbled about French visitors eating too much (tucking into the jam and having a weekly meat ration in one meal).⁵¹⁹ As for Irene, she strongly expressed her anger against a couple of her friends coming for tea: 'Unfortunately I had just finished a cake as a treat for the children, rather a luscious one, [with plenty of sugar and fat]. The greedy wretches ate so much that there was only just enough left over for the children.'⁵²⁰

⁵¹³ MOA D 5378, August, November 1941; MOA D 5240, April, November 1940.

⁵¹⁴ MOA D 5239, April 1942.

⁵¹⁵ MOA D 5378, November 1941.

⁵¹⁶ MOA D 5378, May, August, November 1940, January, July, August, October, December 1941, October 1942.

⁵¹⁷ MOA D 5240, March, April 1941.

⁵¹⁸ MOA D 5239, October 1942; "MOA D 5201, April, September 1941, April 1942.

⁵¹⁹ MOA D 5378, December 1943.

⁵²⁰ MOA D 5427, November 1942.

It is impossible to know if her visitors ate the cake innocently or if they took advantage of the situation, but this last explanation could be relevant. Months of privations and frustrations had an opportunistic effect on the diarists and, in all probability, on a majority of the population. In March 1945 Edna, echoing other diarists, reported that people, including herself, 'gloat over references to good things to eat'. More significantly, her reaction when misdirected to an exhibition, she arrived at a party instead. When presented with food, she 'took good care to not speak to anyone' and enjoyed her cakes without expressing any trouble.⁵²¹

The same opportunistic perspective developed regarding obtaining desired commodities. Food shortages led to new mercantile practices sometimes immoral or even illegal, and the creation or extension of an informal market, responding to the wartime's extensively controlled one.⁵²² These practices usually involved small quantities and were made on a private basis. The perception of their legitimacy or morality depended on the terms, exchange, private sale, hoarding or black market.

Exchange and private sale

The development of food exchange became noticeable in the sources after 1941, indicating the weight of restrictions and shortages on the diarists. The process is especially visible in Edna's narrative. The new value taken by food and the weight of her needs and desires can be seen with an evolution of the use of surplus: while in April 1941, the extra sugar was given away to raffles, from September it was exchanged for other commodities with friends, and the surplus of milk was sold.⁵²³ Similarly, Amelia began to exchange margarine and lard for cheese with a pupil's mother, while Irene swapped tea for cheese with a friend.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ D 5390, March 1945.

⁵²² Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 59.

⁵²³ MOA D 5390, September, October, December 1941.

⁵²⁴ MOA D 5240, November 1941; MOA D 5427, February, March 1941.

Wartime scarcity did not affect women only. Robert recounted occasional food exchanges or arrangements between co-workers, behaviour unlikely to have existed prior to the war.⁵²⁵ Food was also used as payment for services provided, such as cutting a Christmas tree in exchange for an 'enormous Savoy cabbage' or installing a radio for a neighbour and receiving a pound of sugar as a grateful gift (no previous arrangements were made regarding any kind of payment).⁵²⁶ Naturally, such practices could exist prior to the war. Nonetheless it seems unlikely that Robert would have been paid with cabbage or sugar in peaceful time. Such behaviour developed from a peculiar lack of supply and a notable demand. Those having surplus from their private garden or other sources of food would now sell them. Lillian mentioned raspberries, apples or gathered mushrooms sold by her colleagues, while Robert sold his surplus of eggs.⁵²⁷ Such practices could expand to the level of a small private business as revealed by the example of Virginia Potter. This rich member of the social elite dedicated a significant part of her property to fruit and vegetable growing as well as poultry keeping. A part of her production was sold (on a private basis, but also to a restaurant) with significant gains (more than three pounds in 1943 and twenty pounds the next year).⁵²⁸

These sales, even if illegal, were not perceived as illicit or immoral by the diarists and almost certainly not by a majority of the population either. It was a way to manage the crisis to the best interest of two willing private parties. Such an opinion was shared by Winston Churchill, as demonstrated by his incensed note to Lord Woolton regarding the conviction for illegal gifts of meat by a pig keeper. Such procedure he wrote: 'showed bureaucracy in its most pettifogging and tyrannical aspect' adding that he 'could not see why a person licensed to kill a pig should not be allowed "to share it with friends"'.⁵²⁹ In opposite, the immorality or illegality of hoarding and the black market were recognised,

⁵²⁵ MOA D 5201, May 1941, November 1942.

⁵²⁶ MOA D 5201, December 1941, November 1942.

⁵²⁷ MOA D 5201, October 1943; MOA D 5239, June, September 1943, September 1944.

⁵²⁸ Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top" 227; 231.

⁵²⁹ Quoting R. Hammond, Roodhouse, Mark. "Popular Morality and the Black Market in Britain, 1939-1955." In *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*, Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just eds., 243-265, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 243.

sometimes openly, sometimes indirectly by justifications or bravado that indicate a certain level of uneasiness.

Hoarding

Building stocks in time of crisis could be perceived as a wise attempt to cope with potential shortages or a symbol of the unfair distribution of the war sacrifices, two views noticeable in the five diaries discussing it.⁵³⁰ While Irene openly admitted building up stocks, Edna expressed uneasiness and dilemmas about something she considered as dirty and unpatriotic, still modifying her perspective after months of difficulties.⁵³¹ The three other diarists explained making stocks by the need to prevent a future lack of food (sugar, in particular).⁵³²

The difference between the two perspectives could be related to the kind of commodities purchased and the quantity involved, both related to the diarists' personal attitudes and financial means. Edna, for instance, made a limited reserve of sugar, coffee and tins in November 1939: between 30 and 40 tins and six pounds of sugar for a household of three.⁵³³ Even if, after months of privation, she would buy rare commodities in larger quantity without the same restraint, she never made a large stock of food.⁵³⁴ She explained her restraint by a moral view. Nonetheless, their budget prevented making a large stockpile. In contrast, Irene could, and did, store important quantities of food each time she had the opportunity. Between 1940 and 1941 she listed tinned fruit, fish, meat, milk, as well as dried eggs, honey, syrup and thirty pounds of sugar (reporting a woman who hoarded 140lbs).⁵³⁵ These commodities were hoarded in case of shortage and to ease the preparation of family meals. To some extent, such actions could be understood as

⁵³⁰ MOA D 5240; MOA D 5423; MOA D 5378; MOA D 5427; MOA D 5390.

⁵³¹ MOA D 5427, July, August, October 1940, February, March 1941; MOA D 5390, September, October 1939.

⁵³² D 5240, November 1940; MOA D 5423, August 1941; MOA D 5378, May 1940, June 1940, July 1940, August 1940.

⁵³³ MOA D 5390 November 1939

⁵³⁴ MOA D 5390, July 1941.

⁵³⁵ MOA D 5427, October, November 1940; November 1941.

wise, especially with children, but purchasing significant quantities of tea, jam, marmalade, and syrup just before their rationing would rather be perceived as the typical egoistic manners of an elite begrudged by the population.⁵³⁶ Despite the social judgement related to such practices, and despite potentially depriving other customers of these commodities, Irene did not show hesitation or remorse. On the contrary, she displayed her pride: 'I've actually managed to collect three dozen eggs, mostly in threes from each shop,' she wrote in July 1940, 'and we had nine saved from what the egg man bought last week. What a triumph!'⁵³⁷ Her lack of conscience was maybe due to the fact that food hoarding and regulations fraud was common in her circle, creating a norm of behaviour justifying her acquisition.⁵³⁸ However, it demonstrates the variability of opportunity, priority, actions and attitudes of the diarists.

While the immorality of hoarding was debatable, the illegality of the black market was not.⁵³⁹ Nevertheless, it seems to have been a quite familiar source of food supplies according to the various observations made by the four diarists who specifically wrote about it, either reporting their own experience or those of friends and colleagues.

Black market

'The existence of a "black market" was little disputed,' states Angus Calder, its magnitude on the other hand is harder to determine, due obviously to its secret nature.⁵⁴⁰ This amplitude was studied by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska in *Austerity in Britain*. Her analysis determined the existence of a general violation of the rules by food retailers, producers, and especially farmers rather than an organised large-scale criminality.⁵⁴¹ Confirming such legal findings, Mark Roodhouse added a human dimension to these official sources. In *Black Market Britain* he highlighted the relationship between people's motivation,

⁵³⁶ MOA D 5427, July, October 1940, March 1941; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 2000, 78–9.

⁵³⁷ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁵³⁸ MOA D 5427, July 1940; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 207.

⁵³⁹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 153–55.

⁵⁴⁰ Calder, *The People's War Britain*, 254: 407.

⁵⁴¹ See chapter 4, Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 151–202.

situation and reaction to unfairness or favouritism. He also discusses the ethical component of illegal purchases, the self-deception, justification and dilemma, as well as the frustration and the feeling of entitlement expressed by black marketers.⁵⁴²

The generalisation of such practices (the black market was present in the shops, but also within social circles and at work) and the human factors involved are present in the testimonies.⁵⁴³ For the diarists, the black market was essentially a way to get sparse commodities under the counter or from the milkman, even if occasionally illegal purchases of larger proportions were reported. They focused primarily on illegal purchases used to counterbalance the restrictions and shortages at home. However, the black market was also noticed when eating out. On various occasions Lillian commented on the quantity, variety and quality of the food served, making clear that such portions of rationed food could only be illegal (but enjoying her meal anyway).⁵⁴⁴ The menus of the luxury restaurants attended by Irene strongly suggest some illicit arrangement as well. This is not surprising, as asserted by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska: 'Restaurants and Hotel were particularly well placed to exploit black market opportunities'.⁵⁴⁵ In addition, those like Irene and others with financial means could, and would, afford the extra charges meant to compensate catering regulations in order to get pre-war standards of meals and add to variety in their diet.⁵⁴⁶

The testimonies suggest that the tension between need, desire, frustration and personal morale had a greater influence than social pressure or regulations on the decision to acquire illegal goods. Special occasions such as a wedding or a long period of a specific commodity shortage could justify an illegitimate purchase.⁵⁴⁷ Contravening the law was often justified, usually by personal circumstances. Lillian, for instance, felt 'no qualms of

⁵⁴² Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 197–202.

⁵⁴³ MOA DR 2903, January, June 1942, February 1943.

⁵⁴⁴ MOA D 5239, July 1941, January, April 1942.

⁵⁴⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 166–7.

⁵⁴⁶ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 233–241.

⁵⁴⁷ MOA D 5378, December 1941.

conscience' to get more than her fair share of milk in 1943 and 1944, as she was exhausted and in bad health after three years of wartime diet and a very demanding job.⁵⁴⁸ As for Irene, her moral dilemma was usually resolved by justification related to her children who 'come before her conscience'.⁵⁴⁹ Her recounting of illegal purchase illustrates the role of retailers in the process and the financial means that permit such purchases:

The local delicatessen, a one-man business, informs me that I can have a dozen eggs from there if I don't mind paying 4/-. I am so absent minded that it never occurs to me that this is monstrously illegal; the government-controlled maximum price is 2/9. I merely think what expensive eggs, but a whole dozen worth it at any price for the children – I feel most uncomfortable when I suddenly realise what I've done. But the eggs are already in isinglass (A/N: bacterial resistant gelatine), so I'm spared a mental conflict over the question of returning them – a conflict in which I'm afraid, conscience would quite definitely be the loser anyhow [...] it isn't my first 'naughtiness' in regard to the larder in this war, either, though I think it's the biggest'.⁵⁵⁰

Her uneasiness did not prevent her regularly repeating such actions, justified by her children or the faulty Government management of the food distribution:

Condensed milk is now on points at 8 a can, [the egg man] offered to let me have cans at 4 points instead [...] I feel a little guilty at benefiting from such black-seeming arrangement; but after all the present milk allowance is hopelessly inadequate and 8 points is a terrible lot for just one can.⁵⁵¹

Her justifications and the use of the term 'naughtiness' or 'black-seeming arrangement' instead of black market suggest an attempt to distance oneself from a sensitive reality and could be a demonstration of her discomfort, as described by Mark Roodhouse.⁵⁵² Nonetheless, her remarks indicate the use of the black market quite early in the war (July 1940, contrasting with the other diarists commenting on black market rather at the end of

⁵⁴⁸ MOA D 5239, November 1943, January 1944.

⁵⁴⁹ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁵⁵⁰ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁵⁵¹ MOA D 5427, November 1942.

⁵⁵² See Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 196–206.

1941). In addition, while the purchases recounted above suggest a minor implication, the commodities illegally acquired by her servant from a friend grocer were not insignificant (butter, sugar, tinned food and so on).⁵⁵³

Illegal purchase, like hoarding, appeared to be common in her circle, reflecting the advantages given by financial means and the attitude of the upper class, 'the group whose participation in black market occasioned the most comments and greatly alarmed law-and-order bureaucracy,' according to Mark Roodhouse.⁵⁵⁴ The testimony of Irene verifies the implication of personal priorities in decision making and indicates how the family food situation has prevailed on any legal or moral considerations. In contrast, the story of Edna shows a progression toward illegal practices, demonstrating the importance of the time factor and the weight of frustration in her decision making.

Without doubt, Edna initially faced an ethical dilemma regarding food supply, as demonstrated by various observations made in September 1939: 'Just at the moment I am hanging between two decisions', she wrote on the 1 September, 'one that buying is a patriotic foresight and the other that it is a dirty form of hoarding.'⁵⁵⁵ Her judgement on hoarding prevented her from building a stock of what she called 'rationed stuffs' such as sugar, tea or tinned food, despite being advised by the sale assistant to do so. Her concern about other commodities is evident as she wondered: 'In the circumstances am I unpatriotic to buy in luxury non-rationed goods?'⁵⁵⁶ A change of attitude is noticeable in 1941. While she disapproved of people using the black market in July 1940, her comments one year later were less judgemental and rather informative, as if such practices had become a fact of life among others.⁵⁵⁷ The issues with quality, quantity, or variety of food and, above all, the lack of fruit had an important influence on her perspective and her behaviour. In April 1942, she reported her first purchase under the counter, without moral

⁵⁵³ MOA D 5427, July 1940, November 1941, May 1942.

⁵⁵⁴ Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*, 197.

⁵⁵⁵ MOA D 5390, September 1939.

⁵⁵⁶ MOA D5390 September 1939

⁵⁵⁷ MOA D 5390, October 1941.

issue and even expressing her contentment, revealing the influence of privation and frustration on her previous restraint:

The wee girl came up to me and said “would you like some apricots?”. So I went to another part of the shop and the transaction was effected on the “under the counter” basis. My first experience of “under the counter”. I said, “that is kind of you”.⁵⁵⁸

This underlined ‘is’ could result from the fact that it was the first time she was offered some ‘extras’ in three years, while others seemed to get weekly additions to their ration.⁵⁵⁹ The fact that apricots were a non-rationed commodity perhaps eased her moral issue, but the importance of her desire for fruit cannot be underestimated. Edna craved fruit and had great difficulty in getting any, because shopkeepers kept them for registered customers or because they had all been bought during working hours, a situation she resented as very unfair. Her contentment is perhaps due to the pleasure of having fruit, but also to the feeling that her desire and her entitlement to get some were finally recognised.

The emergence of such behaviours and perspectives were not uniquely the result of a decrease of food availability. The relationship between their social class and their response to the circumstances is perceptible in their preferences and attitudes. All diarists suffered from the wartime food situation, especially from mid-1940 to 1942, although not similarly. The combination of pre-war habits and funds influenced the degree of impairment of the eating habits of the diarists and their possibilities to respond to it.

2. Social Class: Eating Habits, Preferences and Attitudes

This second section focuses on the sociological aspect of wartime food, aiming to explore in what ways and to what extent social class affected the adaptation or evolution of food habits while facing a crisis. As demonstrated in the previous section, food scarcity not only

⁵⁵⁸ MOA D 5390 April 1942

⁵⁵⁹ MOA D 5390, October 1941.

influenced the eating habits of the diarists, but also their perspectives and attitudes. While the diet of the population adapted to food availability, the eating habits, tastes or distastes shaped prior to the war influenced the perception of the diarists about their personal situation. As stated by Ina Zweiniger Bargielowska, used to a richer and more varied diet, the better-off suffered more of the rationing and food shortages than the poor whose eating habits were more adapted to the wartime diet.⁵⁶⁰ This divergent degree of difficulties between social classes was already recognised at the time, as indicated by this report made in 1941:

Restriction brought much smaller dietetic changes to *the poor section of the community* than to the higher income groups. For poor people 'the acquisition of food... has always been a major problem'...there are indications that 'the poorer people themselves do not regard their food position as materially altered. It seems that so long as bread and potatoes are unrationed the position will be tenable'... Among *higher-income groups* food 'is one of the chief topics of conversation'. It is noticeable that 'such persons, even where enabled by adequate funds to buy generously non-rationed goods, and such luxuries as are available, have suffered a considerable reduction of their standards of living, though a far greater proportion of their income is now spent on food than in peace time.'⁵⁶¹

The report focuses on the financial side of the matter, a theme of importance in the diaries. All the diarists complained about the increase of price and unsurprisingly, those with the lower income suffered more difficulties in managing their diet and had to make greater sacrifices without much means to compensate them. The comparison between the testimonies and the food habits of the middle classes presented in the first section of this thesis confirm a significant deterioration of the diarists' diet in quantity, quality and variety. Their decrease of meat and fruits consumption is a good indicator of such degradation and the evidence found in the diaries confirm that the restrictions or disappearance of usual commodities created the circumstances for new food practices.

⁵⁶⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 39–44.

⁵⁶¹ quoting PRO, INF 1/292 27 Aug – 3 Sept 1941, quoting from a report by the Cambridge Regional Information Officer (emphasis in original) Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 71.

However, the diarists' taste, distaste and social prejudices stayed significant regarding food choices, especially for those belonging to the higher classes.

The commodities looked for or whose scarcity was more remarked upon indicate a social variation of eating habits and preferences, while the rejection or avoidance of some products support the argument that, despite the wartime difficulties, the social role of food kept its importance.

Food as a Social Marker: Consumption

Consumption, as stated by Alan Warde, relates greatly to normative and social regulations. Regarding food, in addition to its emotional aspects, eating and drinking reflects cultural and social belonging as well as individual and group identity, as the structuring of tastes and food habits is a consequence of social and cultural affiliation.⁵⁶²

As for Stephen Mennell, he declared that key elements, including social class, create food consumption patterns that resist poverty and shortages and explain the foundation of social and cultural eating preferences and practices.⁵⁶³

The findings of this study support these affirmations. The diets of the diarists (and their peers according to the testimonies) show a variety and quality of food usually related to higher socio-economic classes. Their numerous comments about fruit and their focus on vitamins, as well as food choices corresponding to the current nutritional beliefs, confirm such an argument.⁵⁶⁴ These food habits distinguish higher from lower social groups in accordance with the theory of distinction developed by the French sociologist Pierre

⁵⁶² Warde, *Consumption, Food, and Taste*, 21–2; Belasco, *Food*, 8; Lupton, Deborah. "The Heart of the Meal: Food Preferences and Habits among Rural Australian Couples." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 22, no. 1 (2000), 94.

⁵⁶³ Mennell, Stephen, Anne Murcott, Anneke H. van Otterloo, and International Sociological Association. *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet, and Culture*. London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992, 54; Warde, *Consumption, Food, and Taste*, 39.

⁵⁶⁴ Interestingly, Mennell gives the example of the consumption of fruit as a social marker for the 1980s and 1990s, a commodity that was very representative of the social class in the 1940s as demonstrated by the quantitative analysis of the Directive Replies of April 1943 and the diaries Mennell et al., *The Sociology of Food*, 54.

Bourdieu.⁵⁶⁵ The degree of distinction in eating based on class can be illustrated through the notion of ‘haute cuisine’, for instance. A cuisine presenting a differentiation between certain foods and the ways of preparing, cooking and serving them creates a social hierarchy within the same society.⁵⁶⁶ When considering the kind of food eaten out by the diarists, the difference between upper-class Irene (luxury restaurants), middle-class Lillian (restaurants and hotels) or lower-middle class Clara (café) is evident, demonstrating the importance of to their specific place within the general social group to which they belong.

A similar distinction based on everyday eating habits is observable in the sources. The results of the analysis of the replies to the Directive of April 1943 confirmed that the respondents (predominantly middle class) saw a levelling down of their diet with a reduction of the consumption of fruits, meat, butter, or eggs and an increasing consumption of starchy foods and protein substitutes. The same is obvious for the diarists. Observations about commodities such as asparagus, lichees and other foreign delicacies or complaints about the degradation of the quality, quantity and variety of food are all evidence of the influence of their social class on their eating habits and their tastes. The replies also reveal that such changes were mainly understood, but not appreciated, some respondents expressing a strong distaste for commodities such as margarine, strongly associated with the poor. Similarly, the diarists showed the same dislike for specific commodities, sometimes refusing to eat them despite the situation. This choice to deprive oneself rather than consume a despised ingredient supports the statement made by Warde about social differences that adapt to circumstances, preserving social division, in this case not by the adoption of specific commodities, but by their rejection.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ Consumption habits and tastes are related to social class through a wealthy “taste of luxury (or freedom of choice)” opposite to a “taste of necessity” adjusted to financial means. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 176–8; Warde, *Consumption, Food, and Taste*, 8–9, 40.

⁵⁶⁶ Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996, 98–100.

⁵⁶⁷ Warde, *Consumption, Food, and Taste*, 29.

Food as a Social Marker: Rejection

Using the social quality of a commodity as a discriminator is another way to mark a social identity.⁵⁶⁸ For Gill Valentine, consumption reveals the ‘social relationship of inclusion or exclusion’ and decisions on what to eat, when to eat or how much to eat are shaped by cultural background.⁵⁶⁹ In consequence, the identification of middle-class affiliation can be revealed by an expression of disgust for ‘the low’ and its rejection.⁵⁷⁰ A perspective defended by Mennell:

Likes and dislikes are never socially neutral, but always entangled with people’s affiliation to class and other social groups. Higher social circles have repeatedly used food as one of many means of distinguishing themselves from lower rising classes. This has been manifested in a succession of styles and attitudes toward food and eating.⁵⁷¹

The influence of social class is noticeable in the rejection of specific commodities despite shortages and privation by some diarists. Irene, for example, expressed unambiguously her dissatisfaction regarding a gift of tea in March 1941: ‘An awful disappointment – the promised ‘birthday present’ of tea arrived from S. 5 pounds of it – but it’s China, which is less than no use to me at all!’⁵⁷²

Her dislike of China tea could be linked with the emergence of respectable or imperial tea-drinking in opposition to the cheapest low-class habits during the Victorian period, thus result from a distant prejudiced habits, but there is no evidence for her preference.⁵⁷³ Still, five pounds of tea represented months of ration at the time, and Irene, even if stating that she felt depressed by its rationing (she was a heavy tea drinker) preferred to deprive

⁵⁶⁸ Mennell, “On the Civilizing of Appetite,” 391.

⁵⁶⁹ Valentine, “Eating in,” 491.

⁵⁷⁰ Lawler, Stephanie. “Disgusted Subjects: The Making of Middle-Class Identities.” *The Sociological Review* 53, no. 3 (2005), 429–30.

⁵⁷¹ Mennell, Stephen. *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. (Oxford; New York: B. Blackwell, 1985), 331–2.

⁵⁷² MOA D 5427, March 1941.

⁵⁷³ de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires” 179–182.

herself rather than drink Chinese tea instead of Indian tea, demonstrating the power of distaste in food choice despite difficult circumstances.⁵⁷⁴ Amelia, on the other hand, would probably have appreciated the tea from China, but without milk. She had to give up drinking her tea with milk because of the rationing. However, when offered a large tin of American condensed milk, her reaction showed clearly the limit of her adaptation: 'It will most likely be used in pudding,' she commented, 'as I cannot drink condensed milk in tea.'⁵⁷⁵ Norma shared this dislike for condensed milk, while the other diarists complained about the fresh milk ration, indicating that it could not be replaced by evaporated milk.⁵⁷⁶ It is noticeable that having children influenced the perspectives. Both Irene and Robert, despite their social differences, brought condensed milk, not as replacement for fresh milk in tea, but for their children (both complaining about its price).

While condensed milk could find its way to the better-off wartime kitchen despite its working-class connotation, another socially marked commodity, margarine, could be more drastically rejected as demonstrated by aristocrat Norma in May 1943: 'I manage on the weekly ration butter without using the common margarine, realising of course that in any other country I won't have any butter and jam at all.'⁵⁷⁷

Her preference for butter and her dislike of margarine resulted in an inequitable share of the fat ration within her household, as she gave margarine rather than butter to the evacuee children she was looking after, justifying herself arguing that, 'it is pretty much the same food value'.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁴ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁵⁷⁵ MOA D 5240, December 1941; MOA DR 1534, "Class" June 1939.

⁵⁷⁶ The consumption of condensed milk was socially related, and presumably connoted as well. Crawford determined a weekly "per caput" consumption varying from 0.05 (equivalent pints) in class A to 0.57 in class D (and an inversely proportional consumption of fresh milk with 5.06 pints in class A for 2.14 in class D). Crawford and Broadley, *The People's Food*, 221–2.

⁵⁷⁷ MOA D 5378 May 1943.

⁵⁷⁸ MOA D 5378, May 1940, March 1941, May 1943.

Amelia tried to avoid margarine too, postponing its consumption until winter 1941.⁵⁷⁹ In her case though, bad memories from the Great War had some responsibility. Edna, on the other hand, stated in November 1939 that having to eat margarine would not upset her. Her remark indicates that she was not used to consuming it, but also that she was maybe less choosy and more pragmatic, a character trait possibly resulting from the financial difficulties she faced in her youth. A reported comment from a friend of hers demonstrates that, when no other choice, quality and price would mark the distinction:

Middle-class people, if forced to eat margarine would not mind but they would want Stork at 8d and that cannot be. There is only one brand at 6d. Middle-class people have to take this inferior grade.⁵⁸⁰

The choice of word is significant. Using the verb 'forced' instead of 'have to' or 'must' demonstrated the lack of options, as well as the reluctance to comply expected from the middle class. The notion of inferiority regarding price (and presumably quality) is also noticeable. The negative reactions to margarine and the fact that the diarists were not used to purchasing and consuming it prior to the war confirm the analysis of the replies of 1943 and echo those of a middle-class housewife quoted in *Austerity in Britain*: 'I hate it; I'd rather have dripping.'⁵⁸¹

The attitude toward margarine was mainly related to its consumption by the poorest part of the population and its rejection strongly linked with social status. As described by Alysa Levene in her article, *The Meaning of Margarine in England*, margarine was 'a visible marker of personal social and economic status [...] a vehicle for a wider set of notions to do with health, economic status, personal pride and freedom of choice'.⁵⁸² A perception noticeable in the quotes presented denoting a disgust that had not much to do with the flavour of the product.

⁵⁷⁹ MOA D 5240 January 1941.

⁵⁸⁰ MOA D 5390, November 1939.

⁵⁸¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 72.

⁵⁸² Levene, Alysa. "The Meanings of Margarine in England: Class, Consumption and Material Culture from 1918 to 1953." *Contemporary British History* 28, no. 2 (2014), 2; 4.

Interestingly, and seeming to confirm the product's social preference (or the degradation of the quality of butter), the only diarist expressing satisfaction with margarine was working-class Robert: 'I bought ½ lb of fresh roll margarine (Stork) to economise on butter. We find it is remarkable good stuff, quite of the standard of our present butter.'⁵⁸³ The rejection of specific commodities was not the prerogative of the better off, even if the freedom of choice was greatly correlated with financial possibilities. Edna, for instance, couldn't afford to be too difficult. She made clear that the consumption of certain dishes was due to the circumstances and not personal choices. Pies, for example, were not 'the kind of things' they normally bought.⁵⁸⁴ It was also not unusual for unprivileged evacuees to reject food they were not used to.⁵⁸⁵ Norma mentions difficulties with her evacuee children who, 'do not "take" eggs, porridge, butter or other ordinary countryside food.'⁵⁸⁶ 'Try to make evacuees eat greens, vainly', she wrote in May 1942.⁵⁸⁷ Such lack of enthusiasm for vegetables is not uncommon with children. Nevertheless, a comment from one of the evacuees confirms the influence of social class and income on their taste: 'In Glasgow you have to pay for vegetables, instead of just getting them,' she explained to Norma, in reference to the vegetables from the farm, and therefore they were not used to them.⁵⁸⁸

While this remark validates the concept of 'taste of necessity' shaping food practices, defended by Bourdieu, it does not explain the reluctance to change them when offered the opportunity. James Vernon and Peter Atkins established that the attempts to improve the nutritional content of meals, or the addition of unusual dishes in canteen or community feeding centres, faced resistance from customers.⁵⁸⁹ Indeed, the vast (repetitive and patronising) nutritional propaganda aimed at the lower classes organised

⁵⁸³ MOA D 5201, March 1940.

⁵⁸⁴ MOA D 5390, July 1941.

⁵⁸⁵ MOA D 5378 September 1939.

⁵⁸⁶ MOA D 5378 March 1942.

⁵⁸⁷ MOA D 5378 May 1942.

⁵⁸⁸ MOA D 5378, May 1942.

⁵⁸⁹ Vernon, *Hunger*, 190–1; Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time" 149–50.

by the Government via printed materials or wireless message was rather ineffective, as people resisted attempts to change a diet they considered as good for them, despite the official or social disagreement of such opinion.⁵⁹⁰ According to Vernon, this unwillingness to alter eating habits represents the negative response to a nutritional education delivered by a 'good society' desiring to readdress the taste of the customers and improve the eating practices and habits of the population.⁵⁹¹

Food as Social Marker: Opinions

Food as a social marker is not only noticeable through the commodities the diarists ate or rejected, but also on their attitude to lower-class diet and eating habits. Edna, for instance, stated in June 1939 that the working-class diet contains too much bread and potatoes and that 'soup made of a penny worth of bones, potatoes and bread crust is served frequently' as 'their concern is to stave off hunger and not to prepare meals which are dietetically sound'. Showing unfortunate foresight, she nuanced her negative judgement, recognising that many 'would do the same in the same circumstances'.⁵⁹²

Irene did not show such a tolerance. She displayed a clear dissociation from the lower classes through her comments about their eating habits and the superiority of her own choices. In November 1940, commenting on the food offered and bought at the mobile canteen she worked at as a volunteer, she not only described what she considered as typical working-class taste, but also made clear her judgement on it:

The food was all of the meat pies, sausage rolls, bun, and jam-tart variety – with chocolate and cigarettes [...] Among solid things the sweetest sold best – jam-tarts, Eccles cakes, and, above all, doughnuts. The clientele consisted mostly of service men, but also a leavening of railway workers and telegraph-boys. Two of the latter had an elevenses consisting of four "cream"-doughnuts each, with, to follow, a 2d chocolate bar for one of

⁵⁹⁰ Calder, *The People's War Britain*, 383; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 110–2; Also see Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*; Vernon, *Hunger*.

⁵⁹¹ Vernon, *Hunger*, 190–1.

⁵⁹² MOA DR 1085, June 1939.

them, and TWO MORE DOUGHNUTS for the other to my complete horror.⁵⁹³

In January 1941, she stated that ‘maybe something good will come from the food front through the education of the public about simple and nutritious food’ confirming her social viewpoint and indicating a belief in the possibility that the war could be an engine of social progress.⁵⁹⁴ Her hope did not last long. Two months later, she expressed her disapproval of the working class care of children and her lack of faith regarding a potential improvement on that matter:

We are often told by our customers that they want some chocolate to take to their family [...]. This business of feeding vast quantity of chocolate to infant is a thing which appals me. (I never realised, till chocolate became so scarce how universal it is among the lower classes [...] plenty of mothers at the shelters our van then served used to buy two or three twopenny bars of chocolate every morning for each one of their children, babies in arm as well as toddlers – apparently as the piece de resistance of their breakfast, of which remainder would consist of mugs of strong tea and sticky, stodgy buns.....). But there’s nothing whatever one can do about it: to condemn it is so much waste of time [...] (B. started telling a man the other day that chocolate was not at all good for tiny babies, but he just thought her cranky, and moreover – when she added that she wouldn’t ever dream of giving chocolate to her own small children – thoroughly selfish as well.)⁵⁹⁵

These last sentences not only indicate the vast gap regarding food habits between these two upper/middle-class women and their working-class consumers, but also the significant difference of nutritional knowledge (or belief) and the prejudices shown by both social groups toward the other. These comments reflect the better-off ‘class racism’ that associated an unhealthy penchant for sweet food with lower classes and their indulgent and unwise diet.⁵⁹⁶ They also indicate the adoption of the pre-war scientific approach to child nutrition by both women, and an additional social judgement regarding

⁵⁹³ MOA D 5427, November 1940.

⁵⁹⁴ MOA D 5427, January 1941.

⁵⁹⁵ MOA D 5427, March 1941.

⁵⁹⁶ Wright and Al., “Food Taste Preferences” 352–3 Quoting Bourdieu.

the lower classes' poor parental capabilities. Moreover, such remarks demonstrate the nutritional propaganda and measures inefficiency on the lower-class habits.⁵⁹⁷

In the same way that the perceptions of working-class eating habits were variously considered, the appreciations of the wartime equalitarian policies varied, depending on the diarists' level on the social scale.⁵⁹⁸

Social class and food policy

Additionally to her view on the lower classes' habits and their apparent inability to progress, Irene also expressed her political opinions. The Government, its decisions and its interventionism in citizen's life was often criticised.⁵⁹⁹ Interestingly, she showed some knowledge about the Soviet Union's system such as the Torgsin (a chain of state-owned stores, providing food and goods usually unavailable in USRR, initially meant for trade with foreigners and using only precious metal or convertible foreign currencies).⁶⁰⁰ Using that example, she expressed her feelings about the wartime left-wing atmosphere:

Come to think, it will end in state socialism – British Restaurants [...] + eventually, no doubt “Torgsin” model states stores, just what we’re fighting against! Well, if we must have national-socialism [...] I wish we could start with some of the possible good features instead of the worse ones.⁶⁰¹

Her remarks indicate her awareness of the social equalitarian spirit and the ‘swing to left-wing’ described by Addison in *The Road to 1945*, as well as her negative opinion on the subject.⁶⁰² The same can be said about Norma, who expressed her exasperation about her shopping difficulties: ‘the consumer goods are getting a little bit like Russia!’ she wrote in

⁵⁹⁷ Vernon, *Hunger*, 210–5, 229; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 112.

⁵⁹⁸ Vernon, *Hunger*, 118.

⁵⁹⁹ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁶⁰⁰ Totten, Samuel Jacobs, Steven Leonard, Bartrop, Paul Robert. *Dictionary of Genocide. Vol. 2, Vol. 2.*, Westport; London: Greenwood Press, 2008, 424.

⁶⁰¹ MOA D 5427, April 1942.

⁶⁰² Addison, Paul. *The Road to 1945 : British Politics and the Second World War*. London: Cape, 1975, 127–30.

July 1942, indicating her view on Government interventionism.⁶⁰³ A social divergence is perceptible within the diaries regarding food regulations, demonstrating the influence of social class on attitude to wartime food management. The contrast between diarists about the point systems is noticeable, for instance. While the other diarists praised the new system (even if Robert found the Government mean with points), Norma and Irene, both from the upper classes, were the only ones to complain about the additional restrictions it brought to their habits.⁶⁰⁴

When exploring elements related to social class and wartime diet, Irene proved to be an impressive case study. Upper class and wealthy, she was definitely not representative of the majority of the diarists, and even less of the population. Irene is the ideal example of the rich, privileged and idle people the rest of the population was complaining about. Thus, she offers an unusual insight into the wartime experience from the better-off perspective. She did not write regularly or extensively, but her comments about food are significant. Her complaints about the scarcity of her usual ingredients, the wartime restrictions and regulations, or the difficulties to adapt to such severe limitations enlighten about the upper-class diet and its wartime modifications.⁶⁰⁵

Her grievances were mostly shared by the other diarists. The quantity allowed for one commodity or another, the difficulty of providing usual dishes, or the monotony of the wartime diet was a common problem. However, Irene was especially critical and incisive in her narrative.⁶⁰⁶ The kind of food shortages provoking complaints was also different. Like the others, she would notice the shortage of fruits, eggs, meat, cheese or biscuits; but she also commented on the disappearance of olive oil, ready-food in cartons, mayonnaise, rice, lentils, semolina and Kit Kat, and other issues related to her pre-war habits.⁶⁰⁷ Some of her remarks could appear quite trivial, if not inappropriate, in such circumstances:

⁶⁰³ MOA D 5378, July 1942.

⁶⁰⁴ MOA D 5201, May 1942; "MOA D 5378" March 1942.

⁶⁰⁵ MOA D 5427, June, July 1940, March, October 1941.

⁶⁰⁶ MOA DR 2500, November 1940.

⁶⁰⁷ MOA D 5427, January-April 1941.

'We'd only been able to get chicken for the casserole [...] neither spring duck and grouse, nor guinea-fowl, were to be had, which was most disappointing'.⁶⁰⁸

Such dissatisfaction stresses the difference between her and the other diarists, who would have been delighted to have chicken. However, she occasionally expressed uneasiness about her luxurious habits in such times, as demonstrated by her justifications:

I had caviar for dinner as it was comparatively cheap. I felt somewhat guilty over so doing, but after all if it is continuing to be imported that is the government's funeral, and if – as I imagine – what we are offered is a part of pre-war stock, it might just as well be eaten up.⁶⁰⁹

On the other hand, she resented the social judgement on her taste, an interesting counter perspective on the notion of unfairness:

Rationing and food restrictions are necessary evils which must be made the best of; but I do resent having it implied that I am a gross self-indulgent gormandizer just because I happen to be very fond of certain beverages and certain expensive form of food which come from abroad.⁶¹⁰

The expression, a 'necessary evil' echoes the public opinion in summer 1940. It took more than a year for the discontent of the population to decrease, the time needed for the control system to improve and for the population to get used to it.⁶¹¹ Nonetheless, despite sharing common food issues, it is probable that a majority of people would have agreed with the 'self-indulgent gormandizer' judgement and even added some worse qualifier for a rich woman with such tastes, many ways to satisfy them and yet who still complained. It is probable that the judgement would have been even more unsympathetic towards Irene's habit of eating in luxury restaurants and her protests regarding their control.

⁶⁰⁸ MOA DR 2500, October 1940.

⁶⁰⁹ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁶¹⁰ MOA D 5427, July 1940.

⁶¹¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 70–2.

While she reluctantly accepted food regulations (keeping in mind that she circumvented them without much hesitation and consequently faced less privation than many others) the wartime restraints imposed on restaurants roused her indignation. The catering rules implemented in spring 1942 became a major source of protests. She wrote abundantly about what she considered a political manoeuvre to calm the population dissatisfaction:

‘[What is the sense to put] all sorts of foodstuffs not in demand by the poor – such as oysters, smoked salmon, game – outside the reach of those who could afford to eat them instead of the more generally wanted foods?’ she wrote in March 1942. ‘Why is it any worse to have oyster and salmon mousse for £2 than pressed beef for 2/- ? Either way the pressure on demand for rationed goods is being eased.’⁶¹²

In April she complained about the five shilling per meal limit, revealing her worries about its impact on luxury restaurants and her eating habits:

Dinner with B. + J. at the Aperitif, feeling it might be our last real orgy as it seems some price-limitation to cut “luxury meals” down to 5/- is imminent [...] the government wants to close down luxury restaurants too [...] how shall we get on when everything is closed down?⁶¹³

In spring 1942 she wrote repetitively about this limitation, its unfairness and irrelevance, being concerned despite her friend’s reassurance about compensating cover-charges.⁶¹⁴ Her anger and her anxiety are a good indicator of the importance of eating out in her habits and the place of restaurants in her wartime food management. Having the means, she needed the opportunity and restaurant regulations, like controlled prices, could decrease her purchasing power. However, according to the fact that such complaints did not continue after the implementation of the regulations, it could be assumed that Irene and her friends were able to maintain their lifestyle without too much trouble.

⁶¹² MOA D 5427, March 1942.

⁶¹³ MOA D 5427, April 1942.

⁶¹⁴ MOA D 5427, March, April, May 1942.

This was made possible by the authorised addition of charges to the five shillings limitation, as expected by her friend. These charges (dancing, entertainment, and special commodities such as caviar or oysters) could bring a meal at the Savoy up to 17 shillings (without the wine, 12 shilling and 6 pence per bottle on the menu of 1944).⁶¹⁵ The menu did not reflect the wartime restrictions, except maybe for a lack of exotic products and an over-presence of potatoes and carrots. Naturally, it is impossible to know what reality hid behind the name of the dishes. Nonetheless, according to John Burnett, and confirmed by Irene's testimony, the Savoy and other luxury places mainly kept to their standards, with some adaptations and restrictions.⁶¹⁶

Irene was the only diarist to eat regularly in luxury restaurants, but eating out was not unusual among the diarists. It was a way to eat off ration, but also to escape the monotony of rationed-shaped home meals. Places such as Lyons and other similar cafés would serve decent and affordable food.⁶¹⁷ Reflecting eating habits, the choice of restaurant and the perception of the food served are a good demonstration of the social class impact on food practices.

Eating Out

Except for Robert (who did not mention eating out) and Celia (who stated that they always ate at home, except for her husband's monthly Masonic dinner) all the other diarists mentioned eating out, at least occasionally.⁶¹⁸ It is impossible to determine exactly if the number of meals taken out of the home increased or decreased as there is no point of comparison. Nevertheless, from the information gathered from the diaries, restaurants were not deliberately used to get unrationed foods even if, as recognised by Lillian, 'Being out for odd meals helps rations immensely'.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 234–6.

⁶¹⁶ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 235.

⁶¹⁷ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 241.

⁶¹⁸ MOA DR 2903, April 1943.

⁶¹⁹ MOA D 5239, October 1942.

Lillian, like the others, mainly took her meals at home, eating out now and again on holiday or weekends with James, with friends or in the canteen she helped from time to time.⁶²⁰ Amelia also ate out on occasion (sometimes having lunch out instead of at school, for instance), while Norma had meals in restaurant when she was in London or Oxford. As for Clara, the whole family sporadically ate out and she mentioned meals taken in cafés with her children. Her personal circumstances played a role in her choice. Spending the most part of her day alone with her children, she liked to go out for a vivifying change rather than for the food.⁶²¹ Two diarists regularly had meals out, with a major difference though. While Irene went frequently out in a spirit of entertainment with her friends for lunch, tea and supper, Edna had a more serious purpose at the Sorooptimists Monday lunch. She also ate, rarely, in cafés with friends.⁶²²

A significant social-class distinction is noticeable regarding eating out habits in the testimonies. The diarists from the upper or middle-middle class generally ate in restaurants and hotels, while the others had meals in cafés or tea rooms.⁶²³ The quality, quantity and variety of choice were a major reference of appreciation for expensive and luxurious places, while price and quantity seemed more important for cheaper ones.

The comparison with pre-war standards was a main source of remarks. The decrease of portions, the restriction of the quantity allowed per customer, or a change of ingredients were commented on and sometimes the menu or the meal consumed was thoroughly described.⁶²⁴ Regarding the wartime catering management, some comments indicate noticeable, but understandable, changes. Edna recounted a decrease of the meat portion or a restricted number of cakes by person. Due to the regulation of flour extraction, the

⁶²⁰ MOA D 5239, July 1940.

⁶²¹ MOA D 5318.1, October 1942.

⁶²² By eating out, it is meant places such as restaurants or cafes, a place chosen by the diarists. It does not include work canteen for instance.

⁶²³ Eating in factories canteen was not discussed, probably because no diarist worked or seemed to have friends working in industrial unit.

⁶²⁴ MOA D 5427, April 1941; MOA D 5239, October 1940; MOA D 5390, April 1942, MOA D 5240, November 1942.

scones or pancakes were made with brown flour and were served with 'a pat of margarine' instead of butter. More significant was a reported discussion about waitresses putting sugar themselves in the drink of the customers in order to avoid abuse or the sugar to be taken away.⁶²⁵ Lillian too reported wartime peculiarities. While on holiday, she noticed an exceptional unrestricted supply of eggs on the table, but no sugar.⁶²⁶ As for Norma, she observed the good quality of the meals provided despite circumstances, but remarked on the price of the wine once in London (lunch 5s; wine at 15s and regarding specifically Tokay wine, £1).

Irene is the diarist who wrote the most about restaurants. She described their menus and compared the quality and quantity of food offered in the various places she went. In February 1941, for example, the Strand Palace is said to have a better choice and less signs of restrictions than others as the only thing missing was lemon for oysters and potatoes crisps for appetisers. She had lemon with oysters at the Mayfair, where she could get more than one main dish, despite the regulations.⁶²⁷ Nevertheless, wartime difficulties became more noticeable later in the year. Writing about the Strand again, she remarked that while choice was still plentiful, the portions had decreased.⁶²⁸ According to her testimony, catering businesses seemed fairly undisturbed by the war, and pre-war standards in luxury restaurants seemed to have been preserved despite rationing and regulations, confirming the various possibilities found by affluent restaurants to compensate catering regulations and price limitations discussed by Burnett.⁶²⁹

Restaurants of all sorts were full, according to the diarists, another mark of the wartime success of catering. Clara accounted that cafés were always crowded though the possibilities for meals limited (if existent, according to her experience of places running

⁶²⁵ MOA D 5390, April 1940; September 1941; January, April 1942.

⁶²⁶ MOA D 5239, June, September, December 1942.

⁶²⁷ MOA D 5427, February 1941.

⁶²⁸ MOA D 5427, April 1941.

⁶²⁹ MOA D 5378, July, August, October 1941, January, June 1942.

out of cakes, buns and even toast).⁶³⁰ Similarly, the places mentioned by Irene were filled with consumers, but food was varied and abundant. In summer 1941, for instance, she had to try various places before going to the Savoy, where she got salmon, new potatoes, asparagus, praline ice and coffee. In May 1942 she mentioned a pre-war selection of pastries and cake at Mayfair and having been advised to take a second helping immediately as 'in a while there will be nothing left'.⁶³¹ Such descriptions demonstrate the variations of eating habits and expectations, but also the inequality of sacrifices between the higher and the lower ranks of the middle classes. This is a nuance of importance when considering a social comparison of the impact of the war on food practices. A common point was nonetheless shared by the diarists: they did not include communal feeding in their wartime food practices, a rejection usually due to a dislike of the food served.

It is noticeable that the only diarist who complained about the inexistence of a British Restaurant nearby was lower-middle class Clara, who would have appreciated a place where she could take the children occasionally, not only to spare food ration, but also spare coal and kitchen utensils, both in shortage.⁶³² Only half of the diarists mentioned an occasional, if not unique, meal taken in a canteen or a British Restaurant. Their judgements on the food varied from good to terrible with common remarks about the lack of taste. Their social class impacted their judgement, with stronger negative remarks from the upper-middle class diarists than from the lower ones, but the relation between quality, quantity and price had its importance for all of them.⁶³³ Edna, for instance, tried a British Restaurant in May 1942. Despite recognising that the meal, especially the pudding, was worth the money spent, she did reckon that British Restaurant standards were below those of her circle and did not return.⁶³⁴ As for Irene, she sometimes went to popular cafés, but did not use communal feeding. She tried a British Restaurant once, finding it

⁶³⁰ MOA D 5318.1, February, March, October 1942.

⁶³¹ MOA D 5427, May 1942.

⁶³² MOA D 5318.1, March 1942.

⁶³³ MOA D 5427, November, December 1941, February 1942; MOA D 5239, December 1940, June 1943, MOA D 5240, December 1941, March, April 1942, April 1945; MOA D 5390, May 1942; MOA D 5318.1, March 1942.

⁶³⁴ MOA D 5390, May 1942.

awful. In contrast, her experience at the YMCA cafeteria, where she had lunch with a friend, was rather good, at least in comparison with the other alternative and their expectations (overcooked meat joint and two vegetables):

We'd always rather turned up our noses at it before, preferring the Corner House for a cheap early meal, but Lyons get more and more crowded and really the food isn't as good there any more since the latest cuts made themselves felt. Everything sounds magnificent on the menu and turns out to be a muddle of the inescapable lunch roll, baked beans [...]. So we decided to try the YW, we were tremendously impressed by the food – both in its variety and in its goodness of cooking.⁶³⁵

Such comments illustrate the prejudices and wartime concessions of Irene and her friends, but also indicate the increase in restaurant attendance, and the degradation of non-luxury catering food. Interestingly, Irene noticed that despite the meat offered, nearly half the customers had chosen the fish, or the soup and baked potatoes with salad and fruit. She explained this choice by the predominance of shop and office workers instead of manual ones. In addition to providing information about the use of communal feeding by lower-middle class white collared workers, her comments show her belief, or knowledge, regarding the food preference of the working class.⁶³⁶

As for the others, Lillian commented on the food served at the canteen where she helped from time to time, where meals were occasionally decent, but mostly 'horrid' sausages.⁶³⁷ Amelia had similarly negative experiences at British Restaurants.⁶³⁸ It is not that she disregarded communal feeding; she usually disliked the food served.⁶³⁹ Another factor influencing her refusal could be her opinion that communal feeding was intended for workers, especially those involved in the war effort. From her viewpoint, those living

⁶³⁵ MOA D 5427, December 1941.

⁶³⁶ MOA D 5427, December 1941.

⁶³⁷ MOA D 5239, December 1940, January 1941, April, June, December 1942, December 1943.

⁶³⁸ She paid 9d for a soup, meat, vegetable and a sweet. The soup was hot but nearly tasteless, meal (sausages, potatoes, beans, sauce) very generous and the sweet a slice of boiled pudding with jam sauce. MOA D 5240, December 1941.

⁶³⁹ MOA D 5240, March 1942.

nearby or shoppers should not eat there and 'crowded workers out'.⁶⁴⁰ A comparable situation was reported by Edna regarding regular restaurants and reporting complaints from workers having problem to eat in restaurants because of the West-End better-off eating out off ration everyday, coming earlier than workers, and making them queuing out.⁶⁴¹

This disinterest of the diarists for an opportunity to spare rations while getting a meal for a very reasonable price challenges the view of Angus Calder about British Restaurants being popular places where good food was served, and supports Vernon and Atkins' view about their modest success (as well as a further evidence of the distinction between class preferences for food).⁶⁴² It is not to say that Calder is wrong, but rather that various factors must be taken into account concerning the use of communal feeding. For instance, a focus on working class (for whom the communal feeding was intended at the first place) would influence such statement. Being a housewife also made a difference. As indicated by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, only 1.3 per cent of housewives had lunch in a British Restaurant, either by choice or by a lack of availability.⁶⁴³ This figure is below the figure for the general population presented by Peter Atkins (the most reliable, according to him, would be 2 per cent).⁶⁴⁴ Nevertheless, social class and food preferences were of major influence and the democratic 'model of a new social community' praised by Le Gros Clark in 1943 did not meet his expectations.⁶⁴⁵

The rejection of communal feeding or socially connoted commodities as well as the different kind of restaurants chosen when eating out confirms the impact of social class on the food choices of the diarists. Another factor, familial status, influenced such choices, with priorities sometimes surpassing prejudices.

⁶⁴⁰ MOA D 5240, November 1941, January 1944.

⁶⁴¹ MOA D 5390 March 1942

⁶⁴² Calder, *The People's War*, 386; Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time" 151 Vernon, *Hunger*, 190.

⁶⁴³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 114.

⁶⁴⁴ Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time" 151.

⁶⁴⁵ Vernon, *Hunger*, 187–191.

3. Familial Status: Priorities, Practices and Perspectives

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the social class of the diarists influenced the impact of food scarcity on their food practices. According to their testimonies as well as contemporary surveys, wartime food restrictions were more keenly felt by the middle classes than lower ones, partially due to larger expenses in food, as recognised by the government at the time, but also more drastic changes in their eating habits as demonstrated by the comparison with the middle-class pre-war food habits presented in chapter one. Another factor affected the impact of the war on food practices and perspectives: the familial and parental responsibilities of the diarists.

This third section intends to demonstrate that such responsibilities played a major role in the perception and management of wartime food difficulties. Each diarist had specific priorities related to their personal situation and these priorities affected their wartime everyday lives, as did their social class and the scarcity of food. To be single or married with children for instance, did make a significant difference regarding the management of the food rations. While having a family (in the larger sense of the term) could be an asset regarding the acquisition and organisation of food, spouses and parents faced specific issues. Providing the adequate amount of vitamins to their children, for instance, was a great concern for the diarists. These issues were perhaps more profoundly felt by mothers and wives, who were expected to supply the family with palatable and nutritionally adequate meals in spite of the circumstances. It is not to say that husbands and fathers were not involved in the process, but it is evident from the diaries that food matters were predominantly managed by women. However, the diaries reveal that the wartime food situation could induce, or increase, the cooperation between husband and wife, especially if they had children.

Wartime Parenting

The management of rationed food is considered, rightly, as more arduous for those living alone than for those having a family as the latter ones had the possibility to adjust their rations.⁶⁴⁶ A typical example would be the use of eggs, milk and sugar in baking, something easier in a family with children, like Norma, than for a single woman, like Lillian. Besides, working members of a larger family, like Amelia, could potentially count on someone to shop during working hours. It could be argued that single workers had communal feeding facilities or more money to eat out or buy unrationed goods. Such things did not really reflect the everyday reality of the single diarists, who either did not have the money to eat out or the opportunity to hunt unrationed commodities because of inadequate shopping hours. According to the testimonies examined, the familial network was essential in the management of the food situation.

A good example of such management can be seen in Amelia's testimony. The mother and sisters managed the pooled rations and the shopping in order to make the best of any opportunities. The same can be said for Edna and the management of her household (even if she was more in charge of the shopping due to the age of her mother). Nevertheless, Amelia and Edna were adult, as were most members of their family. They were also independent, despite, for Edna, living with a parent and a sibling. To be single was a significant factor regarding the wartime food situation as having children (and a husband) maybe meant more rations, but it also meant different worries, additional difficulties and distinct priorities.

Children received the same ration as adults, except for tea (none under 5 years old after 1943) and meat (half ration). In theory, the ration of fresh eggs was tripled for children between six and eighteen months, while the quota of dried eggs was more or less doubled for children under five. Children received more milk as well: seven pints a week for those

⁶⁴⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 79.

under five years old, three and a half pints for those between five and eighteen years old.⁶⁴⁷ In practice, at least according to the diarists, there could be weeks without fresh eggs and the milk ration could be quite erratic. This shortage or lack of supply complicated mothers' lives and the question of 'how feed the family' not only included specific commodities (for those with younger ones, the ration of milk was insufficient) but also prevented providing usual dishes, particularly dessert (an important part of the middle-class midday and dinner meals). Without milk, eggs and fat, making puddings was challenging, if not impossible as remarked by the diarists. The wartime diet and the children's health was another important issue, as demonstrated by the numerous mentions about vitamins and lack of fruits. Oranges were a particular issue, indicating their nutritional importance for parents. While grumbles about the shortage of milk ration or eggs concerned mainly the management of the food situation by the Government, the trouble with oranges was related directly to the favouritism showed by shop owners or selfishness of the customers. The resentment was more personal. The distribution of oranges was a source of strong dissatisfaction for parents feeling that their children were primarily entitled to get them, as expressed by Robert: 'I'm rather mad about it as they have being sold regardless of childrens first claims (sic)'.⁶⁴⁸ Clara, also a parent of young children, similarly reacted to any unfair oranges allocation:

Distribution is not as fair as it might be as people with two or three children may get the same amount as people without children [...] I got two oranges, which means the children had one each, and a neighbour of mine got half a dozen.⁶⁴⁹

Both testimonies confirm the claim of Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska that the failure of the scheme for selling oranges due to the lack of clear regulations was resented by parents and a cause of anger.⁶⁵⁰ It also suggests that concerns about the children's nutrition and

⁶⁴⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 134.

⁶⁴⁸ MOA D 5201, September 1941.

⁶⁴⁹ MOA D 5318.1, August 1941.

⁶⁵⁰ Reserved for children under eighteen with a double allocation for those under five Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 114;134.

health were, at least in regards to these diarists, shared by fathers as well as mothers, indicating that parenting, not only motherhood, influenced priorities.

The rationing of sweets is another example of shared contribution.⁶⁵¹ It could seem trivial as sweets and chocolate were not a nutritional issue. Nonetheless, the topic was of importance, as it was discussed on various occasions by Clara and Robert. This focus on sweets can be related to pleasure, but also to childhood innocence and sweetness, something hard to preserve in wartime as demonstrated by Amelia's comment in January 1945:

After dinner my niece's little girl, about three and a half years old, came along to my house to wait until her mother came to take her home. She asked for her usual sweet, then volunteered the information that she could have no more sweets until the next ration. It seemed almost pitiful for a child of that age to make such a remark [...].⁶⁵²

Amelia did not provide information about the management of the sweet ration within the family, but it seems reasonable to believe that its youngest members received more than their share, as was the case in Robert's family.⁶⁵³ Getting some sweets and others treats was a part of a normal childhood and efforts were made to preserve such normality. This is especially noticeable regarding traditional festivities. The testimony of Clara, for instance, shows that despite all the difficulties, they tried to celebrate Christmas and the children's birthdays as usual. Birthday cakes, usually with mock icing, were produced by mothers for the occasion.⁶⁵⁴ Robert too mentioned that his wife managed to make an iced birthday cake for their son, revealing his knowledge of such domestic detail and his involvement in his children's lives.⁶⁵⁵

Naturally, a sole father cannot be representative of British fatherhood, nor would three mothers represent motherhood. Nonetheless, Norma, Irene, Clara and Robert faced the

⁶⁵¹ 12oz (340gr) of sweets per month

⁶⁵² MOA D 5240, January 1945.

⁶⁵³ MOA D 5201, July, August, October 1942.

⁶⁵⁴ MOA D 5318.1, December 1942; January 1943; MOA D 5378, September 1944.

⁶⁵⁵ MOA D 5201, January 1943.

same kind of difficulties as millions of others with children. Their testimonies reveal shared issues, despite different social class and gender. Still, women were in charge of the major part of the household management, especially providing the family meals (or supervising the process for those with a cook). The task was not an easy one and wartime wives and mothers faced some particular problems related to their role.

Wartime Wife, Housewife and Mother

Historiography discusses women during the war, but the focus is essentially on those working and their social impact.⁶⁵⁶ Despite the fact that a majority of women stayed at home and looked after their family, they did not receive much attention. The efforts they made to preserve normality and manage everyday life according to the high expectations regarding family care, despite troubled circumstances, did not attract much academic interest either.⁶⁵⁷

The term 'housewife' deserves some consideration. According to Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, the word 'housewife' relates to a specific gender, female, and is acquired through marriage (in the 1940s context), motherhood and financial dependence. A housewife is not a person in charge of the housework as domestics are not housewives at their working places. A housewife is related to the notion of 'home' and the idea of looking after a husband and children.⁶⁵⁸ The accuracy of this definition is noticeable in the information given by the diarists about themselves. Edna, single but living with her mother and mainly responsible for their household, did not define herself as a housewife, while Lillian, working full time and whose husband was in the Forces, defined herself as aerodynamicist and housewife. Norma and Irene, who had servants and a cook, also

⁶⁵⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 100; Purcell, *Domestic Soldiers*, 5; see for instance: Summerfield, Penny. "Gender and War in the Twentieth Century." *The International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997): 3–15; Summerfield, *Women Workers*, 1984; Addison, Paul, and British Broadcasting Corporation. *Now the War Is over: A Social History of Britain, 1945-51*. London: British Broadcasting Corp. : J. Cape, 1985.

⁶⁵⁷ Quoting H.Smith Millhorn, "Britain's Kitchen Front" 3; Purcell, Jennifer. "The Domestic Soldier: British Housewives and the Nation in the Second World War¹." *History Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006), 153; App. 8.75 millions in 1943 for 7.25 millions working, Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 101–2.

⁶⁵⁸ Summerfield, Penny. "Gender and War in the Twentieth Century." *The International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997), 150.

presented themselves as housewives (in addition to writer, farmer and mother for Norma, while Irene specified being a volunteer).

The emphasis given to this designation was particularly important for those diarists because of their middle-class belonging. As stated by Angela Davis, the concept of housewife 'was rooted in the social conditions of the bourgeoisie and the middle-classes'.⁶⁵⁹ To be a housewife was a part of these women's identity while their skills in looking after their home and family were a representation of their qualities.⁶⁶⁰ The importance of being a good wife and a good mother, to provide proper meals and to preserve the children's health is visible in their testimonies and influenced significantly their approach to food.⁶⁶¹

This influence was the result of the traditional gender role of women, but also of the significance of the ideals of womanhood constructed in the decades prior to the war.⁶⁶² The 19th and 20th centuries saw the development of the 'professional' housewife and 'scientific' mothers through doctors, childcare manuals and women's magazines.⁶⁶³ It resulted in an increase of expectations and an idealisation of the women's role as a good wife, but above all as a good mother.⁶⁶⁴ 'If maternity is an instinct, motherhood is a profession,' affirmed a mother writing for the *Lady's Home Journal* in 1899.⁶⁶⁵ This was especially true for middle-class women who 'espoused the new ideal of motherhood' to quote Eileen Yeo.⁶⁶⁶ Food was an integral part of this new role. Vitamins and diet became an important element of an infant's care and mothers, as primary providers of food, were

⁶⁵⁹ Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983, 229.

⁶⁶⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Housewifery" 153.

⁶⁶¹ For a definition, see Valentine, "Eating in" 492.

⁶⁶² See Giles, Judy. *Women, Identity, and Private Life in Britain, 1900-50*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995; Lewis, Jane. "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes." *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 159 (1992), 163.

⁶⁶³ Brembeck, "The Twenty-First-Century 'Food Consumer'" 294-9.

⁶⁶⁴ See May, Vanessa. "On Being a 'Good' Mother." *Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2008)

⁶⁶⁵ Apple, Rima D. "Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Social History of Medicine* 8, no. 2 (1995), 166.

⁶⁶⁶ Yeo, "The Creation of 'Motherhood'" 205.

responsible for their children's well-being. Such responsibility created an anxiety related to children's health and the social expectations regarding motherhood.⁶⁶⁷

During the war housewives and mothers were especially targeted by propaganda. Considered as essential to the maintenance of the home front morale and well-being by the Government, they were subject to extensive attention through leaflets and publications about nutrition and home economics.⁶⁶⁸ The Government assigned them the role of patriotic domestic soldiers.⁶⁶⁹ In 1940 the Ministry of Food's Lord Woolton addressed them specifically:

It is to you, the housewives of Britain, that I want to talk tonight. We have a job to do together you and I, an immensely important job. No uniforms, no parade, no drills, but a job wanting a lot of thinking and knowledge too. We are the army that guards the Kitchen Front in this war.⁶⁷⁰

But being a good domestic soldier was exhausting.⁶⁷¹ Shopping went from pleasure to hard work, in particular if the financial means were tight and/or if working hours prevented access to shops.⁶⁷² To be a good mother and a good wife included providing nutritious and pleasant meals to husband and children.⁶⁷³ As stated by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska: 'Rationing and shortages of food [...] added to the housewife's burden.'⁶⁷⁴

Providing 'Decent' Meals to Husband and Family

These expectations, beliefs or duties and the difficulties of meeting them in wartime are present in the diaries. For instance, Lillian, reporting a cut in meat ration in January 1941,

⁶⁶⁷ See Petersen, Alan, Claire Tanner, and Suzanne Fraser. "Practising Food Anxiety: Making Australian Mothers Responsible for their Families' Dietary Decisions." *Food and Foodways* 22, no. 3 (2014)

⁶⁶⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Housewifery" 154.

⁶⁶⁹ Purcell, *Domestic Soldiers*; Purcell, "The Domestic Soldier."

⁶⁷⁰ Quoted in Purcell, *Domestic Soldiers*, 99.

⁶⁷¹ Purcell, *Domestic Soldiers*, 105.

⁶⁷² MOA FR Shopping 1531.1; Heiss, Sarah N., and Benjamin R. Bates. "Where's the Joy in Cooking? Representations of Taste, Tradition, and Science in the Joy of Cooking." *Food and Foodways* 22, no. 3 (2014), 200.

⁶⁷³ Neuhaus, J. "The Way to a Man's Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology, and Cook-Books in the 1950s." *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 3 (1999)

⁶⁷⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 99.

expressed her concerns: 'Another cut in the meat ration. I don't mind having no meat, but I'm going to find difficult to provide adequate meals for James when we're married'.⁶⁷⁵

Lillian would definitely not agree with the 78 per cent of women considered as being well fed reported by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska.⁶⁷⁶ The rationing of meat and the shortage of unrationed meat substitutes, such as sausages, had consequences. Feeling exhausted and being off-colour, Lillian blamed the food situation: 'Wartime diet has a lot to do with it, I'm sure. I can't satisfy my husband and get adequate fat and proteins myself as well'.⁶⁷⁷

These two sentences confirm the significance of providing proper meals as well as the potential buffer role played by women regarding the distribution of rations within the family, supporting the idea that one of the traditional roles of women is to moderate the effects of crisis on the household, sometimes by giving up certain commodities to the benefit of others.⁶⁷⁸ Lillian is the only one who explicitly exposed such sacrifice. Still, even if less directly expressed, it is clear in the testimonies that the preparation of decent meals was an issue for those in charge of a family. Clara, mother of two young children, wrote in October 1941:

I think the food situation has been comparatively good this summer, but I get perplexed sometimes about breakfast. Eggs are scarce and many weeks there have been none, and now lately any kind of cereal has been unobtainable.⁶⁷⁹

According to her, restrictions and shortages made things worse when having children.⁶⁸⁰ She focused significantly on vitamins, mentioning the importance to maintain a good intake of vegetables in order to replace fruit in their diet.⁶⁸¹ She also took advantage of the governmental vitamin scheme and went regularly to the clinic in order to get orange

⁶⁷⁵ MOA D 5239, January 1941.

⁶⁷⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 75, 115.

⁶⁷⁷ MOA D 5239, October 1941.

⁶⁷⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 127–8, 149.

⁶⁷⁹ MOA D 5318.1, October 1941.

⁶⁸⁰ MOA D 5318.1, April 1942.

⁶⁸¹ MOA D 5318.1, September 1941.

juice or blackberry purée (as did Robert and his wife). Clara was very sensitive to the question of nutrition and her role as a mother: 'In my opinion such vital food as oranges should be reserved for children and invalids,' she wrote in August 1941, then, supporting the ideal of motherhood previously discussed, she added: 'In my experience, mothers who are at all conscientious go without such things as fruit, tomatoes and eggs altogether to let the children have them'.⁶⁸²

Price was another problem regularly mentioned. Apples, for instance, were sold at a 'prohibitive price' as 'one pound doesn't last with two children' but 'worth it for health of the children who of course are the only one to have them' (indicating that the father sacrificed his part of fruit as well).⁶⁸³ In addition, as previously demonstrated, she struggled to do her shopping, like the other diarists and most housewives in Britain.

The difficulties faced by mothers, even those with financial means, had a particular influence on their behaviour, as demonstrated by Irene. Her actions, unlikely to have existed prior to the war, indicate her food difficulties and new priorities. In February 1941 after a misunderstanding with friends, she had the opportunity to dine twice. As she could not finish her second main meal, she did something unthinkable under different circumstances, as indicated by her justification:

I'm sorry to say that I sunk so low as to wrap my portion of chicken in a couple of handkerchiefs and take it home in my pocket! In view of the Mother Hubbardness of my cupboard at home I really couldn't bear to let such a beautiful piece of meat go – and after all if I hadn't taken it home one of the waiters would doubtless have done so; it provided an excellent dinner for both the children next day. C'est la guerre...⁶⁸⁴

A month later, she repeated the act again, but on purpose this time:

⁶⁸² MOA D 5318.1, August 1941.

⁶⁸³ MOA D 5318.1, April 1941, May 1941, August 1941, September 1941.

⁶⁸⁴ MOA D 5427, February 1941.

We had an early lunch at the Cumberland [...] I haven't been able to get any liver anywhere for the children for weeks now, so I ordered a portion of liver and bacon as my main course and took the liver home with me in a handkerchief – eating the very generous helping of bacon, which is quite a treat these days.⁶⁸⁵

The incongruity of such behaviour reveals the significance of her priority. While Lillian sacrificed her meat ration for her husband, Irene took the risk of social disapproval in order to provide her children with food she considered as essential. Other examples of such behaviours are present in the diaries. For instance, a mother sending food to her son in the Forces (on his request) and who deprived herself of her rations of sugar, jam, biscuits and tinned meat (arguing that her son should not have less than the others receiving parcels from their family). Edna, who reported the story, judged such behaviour unwise (and the son selfish) because the troops were receiving adequate food while civilians were having difficulties. However, the mother in question seemed to find it normal to sacrifice her rations, whether for love for her son or to preserve her image of a good mother.

To give the family sweets and milk ration or fruits to their children is an expected behaviour from parents, and was present in the testimonies.⁶⁸⁶ Exceptions can be found though, Edna mentioned the mother of a friend who would take all the sweet rations from her husband and daughter (young adult) if she could get hold of their coupons.⁶⁸⁷ As for Norma, she mentioned taking her sweet ration in chocolate (and presumably ate it herself). It was not the case in Robert's family. The two boys ate mostly all the sweet ration of their parents, a situation that was expressed as 'going without saying' by their father.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁵ MOA D 5427, March 1941.

⁶⁸⁶ MOA D 5201 November 1942; MOA D 5318.1 July 1942

⁶⁸⁷ MOA D 5390 February 1945

⁶⁸⁸ MOA D 5201, July, August, October 1942.

Wartime Husband and Father

The role of gender during the war has been discussed by various scholars such as Penny Summerfield and Sonya Rose.⁶⁸⁹ Its is not the aim of this work to discuss it further, but rather to explore the various experiences of the diarists while acknowledging the potential differences of perspectives and behaviour related to their own understanding of their function as spouse or parent. Nonetheless, it must be noticed that while the question of wartime spouses and mothers has been engaged with in the literature (Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska dedicates a whole chapter of her book to housewives and mothers), the question of the home front husband and father has not provoked much interest, perhaps due to a focus on motherhood within gender studies, or the exclusion of fatherhood in research on marriage.⁶⁹⁰ Man and domesticity has been discussed in relation with manliness during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and the seemingly greater involvement of men with their children in the post-war period, even if the traditional role of breadwinner does not seem to have been challenged.⁶⁹¹

Concerning male parenting, a few authors focused on British fathers. Julie-Marie Strange and Laura King attempted to bring to light the importance given to fatherhood in the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries.⁶⁹² More focused on the war, Ralph Larossa dedicated a monograph on American wartime fathers. However, his concern was primary about the

⁶⁸⁹ For instance Summerfield, *Women Workerr*, 1984; Summerfield, "Gender and War"; Rose, S. O. "Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II Britain." *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (1998): 1147–76; Baume Joseph, Norma. "Introduction: Feeding an Identity-Gender, Food, and Survival." *Nashim Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, no. 5 (2002); Stanley, "Women Have Servants and Men Never Eat"; Purcell, "The Domestic Soldier."

⁶⁹⁰ King L. "Hidden Fathers? The Significance of Fatherhood in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain." *Contemporary British History* 26, no. 1 (2012), 25–6; On the topic see: King, Laura. *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c.1914-1960*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁶⁹¹ Francis, Martin. "A Flight from Commitment? Domesticity, Adventure and the Masculine Imaginary in Britain after the Second World War." *Gender & History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 163–85; Francis, Martin. "The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity." *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (2002): 637–52; Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes," 163.

⁶⁹² King L, "Hidden Fathers?"; King, *Family Men*; Strange, Julie-Marie. *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

impact of the war on the culture and practices of fatherhood rather than on the everyday life and relationships of father and children at home.⁶⁹³ This scarcity of studies on the topic makes it difficult to locate the testimonies of the diarists within the secondary literature. Nonetheless, the husbands' and fathers' noteworthy presence in the diaries deserve our attention, in particular regarding their place in the home and the family. The statements regarding the wartime management of food suggest a certain level of complexity and male commitment rather than simply a breadwinner vs. housewife relationship. The indications found in the diaries show that more participation and cooperation occurred than the strongly dissociated gendered role suggested when related to food and parenting. For instance, the 'disproportionate sacrifice of women and mothers' which 'frequently shielded men as well as children from the full impact of the reduction in consumption' described in *Austerity in Britain* is not obvious in the diaries, in contrast with both parents giving up their milk, eggs, fruits or sweets rations for the benefit of their children (without expressing any sense of sacrifice).

This is not to say that the kitchen front domesticity was shared. Male ignorance of the household management is perceptible in Clara's remark on a difference of perspective she noticed while hospitalised:

In my opinion the food was wonderful. At home it was very difficult to get such things as tripe, fish, liver and eggs, and here I had plenty of this kind of food served up very appetisingly [...] The men on the other table who were on a diet like mine, and not having the same awareness of the shortage of certain foods in war time, often grumble about their meals.⁶⁹⁴

Regarding more specifically husbands, contradictory testimonies indicate a possible subjectivity of the writer. The divergence between the behaviours reported by Celia and those regarding her own husband is especially eloquent. According to her, women did not grumble about shortages and restrictions, welcomed the rationing as an absolute

⁶⁹³ LaRossa, Ralph. *Of War and Men: World War II in the Lives of Fathers and Their Families*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

⁶⁹⁴ MOA D 5318.1, March 1943.

necessity and though the 'points' rationing was long overdue, husbands were the cause of most of the troubles:

The selfishness of the huge majority passes belief [...] The wives are hurried to death searching food for husbands who still demand the best of everything, who can't or won't eat cold meat, American tinned meat, but must have salmon, take all the bacon ration, most of the sugar ration and turn their noses at the margarine [...] Working-man hasn't realised what rationing means and still expects his wife to provide the variety he had before the war.⁶⁹⁵

In March 1942 again she reported men grumbling more than women, mostly about food and complicated the life of their wives with their exigencies. In April 1943 she repeats the same opinion on men's attitude, adding that 'it was about time that Lord Woolton turned his attention to the matter'.⁶⁹⁶

It is interesting that such an opinion was given by a female diarist who actually complained on a regular basis. Still it shows that tensions related to the wartime food situation existed between spouses. However, in contrast with the image she presented, Celia's husband was said to never grumble about food and he helped with the shopping.⁶⁹⁷ The same lack of complaints is remarkable regarding all the diarists' husbands, and Celia is not the only one whose husband participated to the food effort. While Norma's husband spent significant time fishing and hunting, substantially improving their food supply, the husbands of Clara and Lillian were occasionally mentioned regarding shopping. Robert, the only male diarist of the selection, was actually significantly involved in the household management, supporting Liz Stanley's point about the 'dichotomous traits or characteristics' of gender roles and her proposition that gender is constructed through interaction and can change over time (as well as circumstances, in our case).⁶⁹⁸ Not only full-time employed and committing considerable time to the garden

⁶⁹⁵ MOA DR 2903, January 1942.

⁶⁹⁶ MOA DR 2903, April 1943.

⁶⁹⁷ MOA DR 2903, March 1942.

⁶⁹⁸ See Stanley, "Women Have Servants and Men Never Eat."

and hen keeping (his wife being involved as well), Robert took on most of the shopping too as he explained in September 1941:

Owing to the distance from the shops and the possibility of being out when sirens go; my wife is less keen on shopping, so I do quite a bit on my way to or from work.⁶⁹⁹

Of course, Robert could be an exception and a single example cannot be generalised. His wife was maybe especially lucky to have a husband with such an opinion about housework:

Personally I believe that housekeeping requires such careful and continuous planning as to call for the qualities of a saint. Certainly the husband, when available is called on to add his quota of scheming, not that his qualities are very saintlike (sic).⁷⁰⁰

The relationship between spouses seems, when based on cooperation, to surmount difficulties, this including the children. In addition to his participation in the household food supply, Robert was also very present as a father, playing a part in the leisure and education of his sons (references were made about Christmas toys making and his eldest son's school). Even if less involved than his wife in the food preparation, Robert was well aware of the nutritional needs of his children and focused on their health, taking advantages of the opportunities to get free orange juice and cod liver oil, for instance.⁷⁰¹

Demonstrating his concern as well as his knowledge of the situation, he wrote regularly about the food problems met by wartime parents. The milk rationing, quality and price were a constant source of remarks between 1940 and 1942, when the situation had improved through the allocation of special ration for babies and the milk school scheme for the older children.⁷⁰² In addition, similarly to Clara, Robert significantly mentioned

⁶⁹⁹ MOA DR 1161, September 1940.

⁷⁰⁰ MOA DR 1161, February 1942.

⁷⁰¹ MOA D 5201, December 1941, January 1942.

⁷⁰² MOA D 5201, January, March 1940, October, November, December 1941, May, July 1942.

oranges in regard to vitamins, availability or unfairness of distribution.⁷⁰³ The significance of these two commodities can be seen in the price they agreed to pay for them, and the fact that, the day after the bombing of their house, Robert went in to get cushions and blankets, but also food, specifically mentioning milk and oranges.⁷⁰⁴

His involvement with his sons reflects a man of his time and Robert seems representative of the new fatherhood described by Ralph LaRossa within an American context. According to LaRossa, the interwar period has been a key moment of the modernisation of fatherhood in America, as demonstrated by the significant increase of attention given to fathers and their role in magazines and official publications about parenting.⁷⁰⁵ The same interest in fathers was current in 1930s Britain, maintains Laura King, stating that the relationship between father and child was debated and fathers, encouraged by public approbation (or social pressure as the notion of 'good father became significant') took on a more 'family-oriented masculinity'.⁷⁰⁶ The surprise felt at the reading of such paternal involvement in Robert's diary probably results from the prejudice regarding fatherhood. As stated by Laura King, even if not reflecting the reality, the image of a distant, uninvolved father is still prevalent regarding the first half of the 20th century.⁷⁰⁷ Exceptional or not, the behaviours and concerns of Robert concerning his sons indicate specific worries and priorities due to his status as father regardless of his socio-economic status, a dimension commonly found in the testimonies. While scarcity of food and social class influenced perspectives, responses and adaptation to the food situation, the responsibility of the diarists toward children or spouse affected their approach and behaviour, demonstrating the significance of familial status as factor of influence.

⁷⁰³ MOA D 5201, September 1941, June 1943, February, March, August 1944.

⁷⁰⁴ MOA D 5201, August 1940, October 1941.

⁷⁰⁵ LaRossa, Ralph. *The Modernization of Fatherhood: A Social and Political History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 9–10, 17, 31, 53.

⁷⁰⁶ King L, "Hidden Fathers?," 26–28.

⁷⁰⁷ King, Laura. "Supporting Active Fatherhood in Britain." *History and Policy*, January 6, 2012. <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/supporting-active-fatherhood-in-britain>; King L, "Hidden Fathers?," 27.

Another factor, time, has to be considered. The war lasted six years and many things changed and evolved, at home as abroad. While the time passing permitted adaptation to the situation, its combination with food frustration could impact the morale and the morality of the diarists. The influence of time is complex and difficult to measure. Nevertheless, it is present in the diaries, as demonstrated in the final section of this chapter.

4. Time and the Food Situation, Perception and Narration

The previous sections have demonstrated the effect of food scarcity, social class and personal circumstances, on foods habits and their perception by the diarists. This last one aims to discuss the influence of time on the food practices and the perspective of the diarists on the matter. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has already demonstrated the major changes of attitudes to rationing between the wartime and the early post-war periods, and their political consequences.⁷⁰⁸ This chapter focuses on the question of food in wartime only, but demonstrates that it cannot be considered as a single period either. As discussed in the analysis of the Directive replies of April 1943, the answers to the same question in 1941 or 1945 would certainly be different. The evolution of the war, the modifications of the food situation, as well as the personal circumstances affected the everyday lives of people, but also their perspectives and priorities. Therefore time is one of the key aspects to consider when studying the impact of the war on food practices not only because attitudes to food are accurately historical and the moment and context are a vital dimension to take into account, but also because of the cumulative effect of the time passing on the wartime experience.

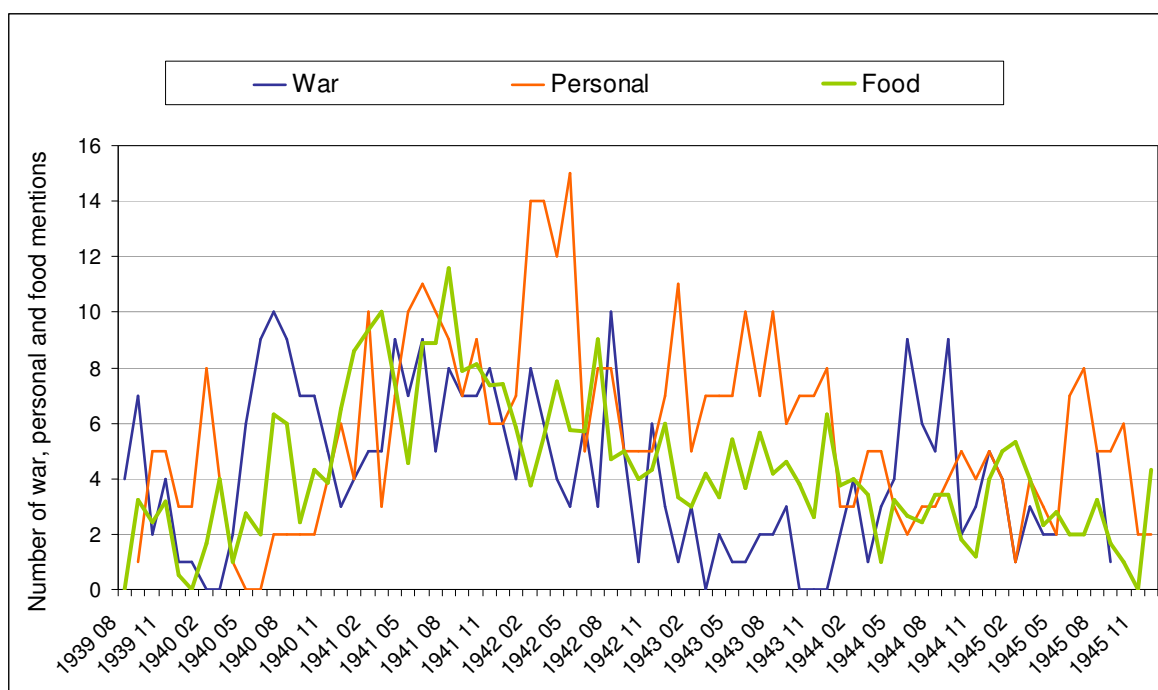
Time allows the determination of changes and continuities as well as recognisable points of reference. However, defining its influence on the attitude and perception can be testing due to the intangibility of intimate feelings. Additionally, while a modification of circumstances (the implementation of a new measure, for example) can be defined quite

⁷⁰⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. "Bread Rationing in Britain, July 1946–July 1948." *Twentieth Century British History* 4, no. 1 (1993): 57–85.

precisely, its effect on the long-term is difficult to determine because of the process of adaptation as well as the variable degree of consequences it could have on different individuals. The degradation or improvement of the food situation is difficult to measure as well, due to its subjective quality. In other words, as stated by Mike Savage: ‘it is no easy matter to use qualitative data to explore change over time’.⁷⁰⁹ The quantitative approach used to analyse the diaries has helped to get a better picture of the wartime food situation over time and its relationship with other issues, while the qualitative analysis has allowed a better understanding of the evolution of the diarists’ perspective and sentiment about it.

The table below, comparing the mentions about war, personal concerns and food demonstrates the variation of their importance between the beginning and the end of the war:

Figure 52: Group food related and non-food related mentions in time



⁷⁰⁹ Savage, “Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain.”

As can be seen on the table, the majority of the comments about food were made between the second half of 1940 and 1942. Different reasons explain this concentration. Firstly, the main governmental measures were implemented during these years, provoking comments from the diarists. Secondly, time was needed to become accustomed to these measures. Thirdly, this was a period of greater scarcity due to the time demanded for the increase of home-produced food in replacement of the imported ones. Finally, the increase of prices was another issue at the beginning of the war. In other words, these years were the most difficult for the kitchen front; a situation that was made worse by the war difficulties abroad

The events of summer 1940, for instance, added a source of stress and worry that included the question of the food supply. The pattern of the chart reflects the weight of the war on the mind of the diarists as well as its impact on food concerns. After the Norway debacle and Germany's victories in Europe, then the beginning of the Dunkirk evacuation in May, June saw Italy declaring war on France and Britain, the occupation of Paris, and eventually France surrendering, letting Britain alone to face what seemed an invincible enemy, all had an impact.⁷¹⁰ The upcoming times seemed quite hopeless, as indicated in a testimony quoted by Simon Garfield in *We Are at War*: 'We are alone in Europe, an incredible situation. The French have been outwitted in a very new kind of warfare. And as we are now I don't think that we stand a better chance' wrote the diarist, adding a few days later, 'The end seems near and inevitable.'⁷¹¹

The importance of the war is visible by the numerous comments made about it, while remarks about work or family drastically dropped. Fear was also very present, as revealed by the following observation made by Amelia on the 8th of June:

Some people are getting frightened [...] some are feeling ill, can't eat, have diarrhoea, can't settle to work etc [...] I myself feel, very strangely, that I can't wonder about what may happen. I can't worry over possible dangers or

⁷¹⁰ Mackay, *The Test of War*, 1999, 8–9.

⁷¹¹ Garfield, *We Are at War*, 266, 281–2.

horrors, or plan what to do [...] To some extent I feel so “dead”, so “battered” mentally, that I don’t care.⁷¹²

Regarding food, mentions increased significantly in relation to price or shortage, but also anxiety. The intimate relationship between the war progress and the food situation was expressed by Edna: ‘I don’t think anyone reading this diary needs to be told that food shortage at some future date is never far from my thoughts,’ she wrote, in reference to a potential invasion and its consequence on food supply.⁷¹³ The significance of food in the life of the diarists is demonstrated by the numerous remarks they made about it. Indeed, food scarcity, the difficulties in shopping and providing daily meals as well as a constant frustrated desire placed food in the everyday mental framework of the diarists. Even if none of those reasons would be relevant, the regulations, ration books and other administrative obligations related to food acquisition made it omnipresent.

This focus on food was noticeable across the war, even if it was more particularly significant in summer 1940, due to the anxiety about the future, indicating the interaction between war and food matters. This relationship between the evolution of the war and the food situation can also be seen in the responses to rationing in wartime and after the war ended. While public opinion predominantly accepted and even praised rationing during the war, its continuation after the victory was a source of great discontent, and morale, rather well preserved during the war, significantly lowered.⁷¹⁴ This variation is significant in the diaries. Rationing, even if sometimes considered as a nuisance, was perceived as a necessity and approved of by the diarists. In contrast, the post-war food situation and the potential continuation of the restrictions was a source of resentment. Edna reported worries about a future worsening of the food situation, with further cuts in the meat and fat ration and the shortage of bread, but also angry comments about such sacrifices made in order ‘to feed the Germans’.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹² MOA D 5240, June 1940.

⁷¹³ Garfield, *We Are at War*, 269.

⁷¹⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 80–86.

⁷¹⁵ MOA D 5390, April, May 1945.

These complaints indicate the resentment felt towards what was considered an unfair situation in regards to the effort made to support the war. They also demonstrate the difference of attitude resulting from the evolution of the wartime circumstances.

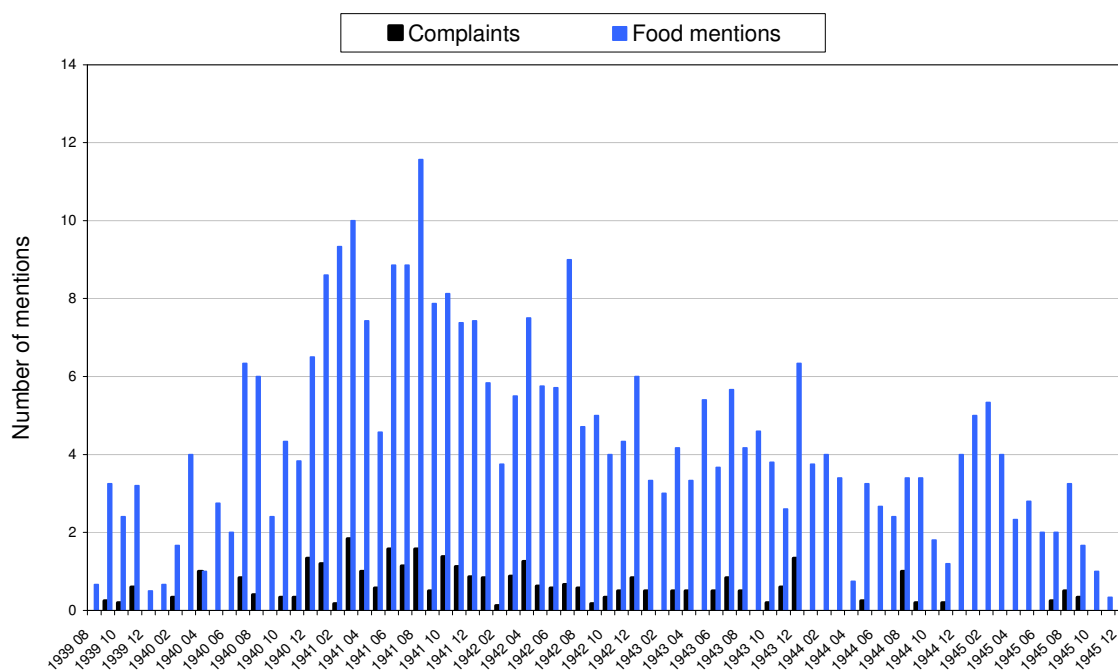
The Evolution of the War and Food Situation

The main link between the war and the food situation was the limitation of importation due to the need to conserve shipping space, as well as foreign exchange.⁷¹⁶ The supply of goods was also influenced by the losses at sea and by air attacks, for instance, which were especially significant in 1940 and 1941, the introduction of Lend-Lease in 1941, which permitted the importation of a significant amount of food from mid-1941 to the third quarter of 1945, or the impressive harvest of 1943 combined with an improvement of imports that allowed the creation of stocks.⁷¹⁷ The combination of these various elements added to better news from the front explains, at least partially, the improvement of the home front situation from mid-1942 perceptible on the following table:

Figure 53: Group food mentions and food complaints in time

⁷¹⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 5.

⁷¹⁷ Hammond, *Food*, 271, 396.



As can be seen in the table, the variation of the number of complaints about food in the diaries indicates an improvement from mid-1942, after nearly two years of difficulties. This positive progress was expressed by Edna. 'All food fronts better than the year before,' she stated in summer 1942, attributing this improvement mainly to the price controls making fruit 'within reach of middle-class purse,' and a larger supply and variety of tinned vegetables, even if expensive.⁷¹⁸

Her testimony points out two major difficulties faced by the population: the increase in prices and the shortage or disappearance of their usual commodities. The quantitative analysis of key words shows the evolution of the shortage with a concentration of mentions about eggs, meat, sausages and cheese between the mid-1940 to the end of 1941, then an increase of comments about fish in 1942, and finally, complaints about potatoes and bread from 1944. The scarcity of potatoes was noticed by Edna and Lillian,

⁷¹⁸ MOA D 5390, June, August 1942.

who made various comments on the topic.⁷¹⁹ While her remarks inform about a wartime change of Lillian's usual diet, they also indicate the variations of the food situation in time:

I'm amused to find Food Facts now telling you how to save potatoes, using flour instead. It makes odd reading after years of being told to use potatoes rather than bread or flour [...] I'm certainly not going to buy any more for myself for the time being. It's only because we were asked to use potatoes rather than flour that I have been cooking them for myself.⁷²⁰

The shortage of potatoes was occasional and related to a decrease of the crop's production in 1944 (potatoes were not imported any more during the war).⁷²¹ In contrast, the other variations of food supply reflect the wartime importations. The quantity of eggs in their shell, for instance, decreased drastically from 159,000 tons (1934-38) to 99,000 in 1940; 59,000 in 1941; 23,000 in 1942, and 15 in 1943 before increasing again in 1944 and 1945 (23,000 and 48,000 tons respectively). This decrease was partially compensated for by an increase of home-produced eggs (65 per cent of eggs were produced in Britain prior to the war but 89 per cent in 1944), but the introduction of dried eggs in June 1942 was a key element as regarding the kitchen front and the potential remarks concerning egg distribution.⁷²²

The second point referred to by Edna, the control of price, was one of the measures taken by the Government to limit inflation. The task was not easy and demanded time. Starting with freezing the prices in December 1940, the control process, its enforcement and the subsidies measures aimed to stabilise the costs of food took another year to be implemented (still, the maximum prices varied over time). The control of price was commented on by the diarists; sometimes positively, such as when Edna discussed the price of fruits, sometimes negatively, in relation with the disappearance of controlled commodities, as noticed by Robert.⁷²³ The efficiency of the measures was also called into

⁷¹⁹ MOA D 5390, January, February 1945.

⁷²⁰ MOA D 5239, February 1945.

⁷²¹ Hammond, *Food*, 393–4.

⁷²² Hammond, *Food*, 283, 392, 394.

⁷²³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 31.

question by Norma and Irene, who noted examples of commodities sold at higher prices than the maximum authorised.

The development of governmental measures and policy according to the variations of the importation system and the need for new sources of supply is an example of the interaction between the food situation and the progression of the war. The measures taken affected the population and the diarists commented on it, usually when a direct impact on their everyday life was perceived. For instance, as previously discussed, the limits imposed on restaurants provoked a strong reaction from Irene, but none from the other diarists, who were not really concerned as these measures did not affect the kind of places they would eat.⁷²⁴ The same self-centred focus is noticeable regarding the milk and vitamins schemes, mentioned mostly by Clara and Robert because of their children. However, two measures and their evolution over time were unanimously discussed and commented on by the diarists: rationing and the points system.

Rationing was the most drastic governmental measure taken regarding food distribution. Its implementation was not immediate, its beginning was deferred until January 1940 and its expansion was progressive.⁷²⁵ In addition, the rations were not steady. The quantity allowed varied, sometimes for a short period of time sometimes quite definitely. For example, the fat and sugar rations increased by two and four ounces in November 1941, then decreased by the same quantity in January 1942, while the quantity of tea for families was definitely reduced with the removal of the ration for children under five.⁷²⁶ These modifications were criticised now and again. The ration of cheese, for example, which was the most volatile during the war, was definitely an issue for the diarists.⁷²⁷ The variations were commented on, sometimes ironically, mostly with exasperation: 'Cheese

⁷²⁴ Burnett, *England Eats out*, 234.

⁷²⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 16–7.

⁷²⁶ Hammond, *Food*, 283.

⁷²⁷ The cheese ration increased from one ounce to two, then three in 1941, then to four and eight in 1943, before decreasing again to six, then four again, and finally varying between two and three in 1944 and 1945 Hammond, *Food*, 402.

ration increased, fine too, but if one gets none of one's ration (we haven't got any for a month) how much is double it?' stated Norma in June 1941, while Lillian, complaining about another reduction of the ration, noted: 'The cheese ration really has been ridiculously inconsistent,' in April 1943.⁷²⁸ These inconsistencies were mostly related to the wartime trade. In addition to a reduced home production, the importation of cheese decreased and increased between 1940 and 1943, making a steady distribution difficult and limiting the ration allowed.⁷²⁹ Other commodities faced the same problem. Wheat, for example, is a good illustration of the cause and effect relationship between war and food, as demonstrated by the case of the National Loaf.

The establishment of brown bread and flour was perhaps presented as a means to improve, or at least maintain, the vitamin and nutriment intake of the population. Nonetheless, the decision to raise the extraction level of the flour was pragmatic rather than nutritional.⁷³⁰ This is not to say that politicians were not aware of the nutritional benefit of wholemeal bread, but they faced a strong resistance from the public as well as the millers and bakers. White flour was easier to manage, and white bread was praised by a population who considered that brown bread was 'not only the bread of the enemy, but the bread of snobbish extremists', another demonstration of the significance of social class tensions regarding eating habits.⁷³¹ The decision to fortify white flour was a response to nutritional concerns, but did not resolve the question of potential shortage due to the British dependence on imported wheat (88 per cent at the outbreak of the war).⁷³² The wheat supply difficulties faced by the British Government between 1941 and 1943 (diminution of American importation and shipping problems during the Battle of the

⁷²⁸ MOA D 5378, June 1941; MOA D 5239, April 1943.

⁷²⁹ Hammond, *Food*, 392, 394.

⁷³⁰ Drummond, *The Englishman's Food*, 450–2; Wilt, *Food for War*, 125–26,.

⁷³¹ Spiekerman, Uwe, and Flemming Just. "Brown Bread for Victory: German and British Wholemeal Politics in the Inter-War Period." In *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*, Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just eds., Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 161–2.

⁷³² Hammond, *Food*, 166–7, 394.

Atlantic) were a factor of importance concerning flour extraction or the composition of bread (dilution of flour with other cereals).⁷³³

The diarists were not aware of such details or they did not discuss them. The National Loaf in contrast was commented on. As with any topic discussed, their remarks could be positive or negative, depending on their pre-war habits and their tastes. For instance, while a friend of hers was indignant about a commodity she 'hated', it made not much difference for Lillian as she did not eat white bread and already baked with brown flour.⁷³⁴ However, according to the lack of comments after a short while, the diarists seemed to having got used, or resigned, to wartime bread and flour.

Time as a Factor of Adaptation and Evolution

The habituation to the National Loaf indicates the role of time as a factor of adaptation. Other examples also illuminate the improvement or degradation of the situation over time. This is especially true for recurring events. Christmas, for instance, with its specific food traditions and national amplitude, provides a good case study of time as a factor of evolution.

Mick Brown states that while regional disparities make the study of wartime Britain challenging, Christmas can be seen as a shared national experience. Supporting the idea of an evolution over time, he presents the chronological wartime Christmases and their particularities, reflecting the progression of the war.⁷³⁵ He also reports the evolution of the food situation and its noticeable impact on Christmas.

⁷³³ The quantity made available for Britain was reduced of about 2000 thousands tons (and about 300 thousands tons for flour and wheatmeal) in 1942, due to the American own needs Hammond, *Food*, 392; Spiekerman and Just, "Brown Bread for Victory" 163; Hammond, *Food*, 259–70.

⁷³⁴ MOA D 5239, March 1942.

⁷³⁵ 1939 celebration similar to the pre-war ones, 1940 tinged with the war events, relief in 1941 due to the involvement of the United States, a feeling of progress in 1942, but depression in 1943 as the war seems endless, and finally of hope to see the war ending in 1944 Brown, Mike. *Christmas on the Home Front 1939-1945*. Stroud: Sutton, 2004, vii–ix, 1, 37, 81, 111, 137, 163.

While commodities were generally still available in 1940 (taking into account regional disparity and difficulties, as well as the disappearance of products from France) the increase in price prevented ordinary people from affording the usual traditional treats.⁷³⁶

Robert and his family faced such issues:

Christmas at home this year is going to be pretty drastically cut. The only gifts we are buying are for our two mothers, our boy B., and L.'s sister's girl M. No Christmas pudding or cake, and no stocks of fruit, sweets or nuts.⁷³⁷

The scarcity of seasonal commodities worsened over time. The importation of exotic fruits decreased drastically and the shortage of poultry increased. The traditional ingredients had to be replaced by what was available.⁷³⁸ The Christmas dinners described by the diarists attest to such inconveniences, with beef, and even sausages and meat pie instead of poultry and pork.⁷³⁹ Nonetheless, efforts were made to celebrate wartime Christmas as traditionally as possible, especially for those with children. Food naturally was a major part of the celebration and the shortages a source of worry.⁷⁴⁰ The Government, aware of the importance of Christmas for the population and its morale, offered special rations for the occasion (tea, sugar, suet, fat or meat depending on the year). In addition, the Ministry of Food, women's magazines and newspapers provided housewives with more or less realistic wartime recipes.⁷⁴¹ The Christmas pudding, because of its rationed or imported ingredients, was a main issue. The examination of pudding recipes and their modifications between 1939 and 1945 indicate the degradation of the food situation and the original recipe could suffer drastic alterations. Celia, for example, had to make their Christmas pudding without any oranges and almonds and had to use a mock almond paste made of soy flour, cocoa and almond essence, while Irene had a 'ready-made pudding'

⁷³⁶ Brown, *Christmas on the Home Front*, 39–40.

⁷³⁷ MOA DR 1161, December 1940.

⁷³⁸ Brown, *Christmas on the Home Front*, 114–17.

⁷³⁹ MOA D 5239, December 1940, December 1942; MOA D 5201, December 1943.

⁷⁴⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 147.

⁷⁴¹ Brown, *Christmas on the Home Front*, 8–9, 38, 84–5, 114, 118, 139, 142, 167; Hammond, *Food*, 402–3.

and the brandy butter was margarine. As for Robert, his wife concocted a 'wartime version of it'; a bread pudding boiled for six hours in order to look 'like the real stuff'.⁷⁴²

The wartime Christmas experiences of the diarists illustrate the effort of adaptation made in order to preserve a national tradition. Providing meals three times a day, every day represented a different challenge. The population had to find ways to get food and to manage their rations. Both tasks required time, either to harvest the home-grown food or to change the usual shopping habits.

Planning Shopping and Growing Food

While the situation was changing over time, for better or for worse, the diarists (and presumably most of the population) grew accustomed to restrictions and the administration of the rations and points. They learned to make the best of what could be available, but also to look forward and plan their purchases. They developed new strategies to counter difficulties and potential shortages. Such planning was perhaps most difficult for Lillian, who had to learn to manage the household of a married woman and the wartime situation nearly at the same time. The point system, for instance, required a change of perspective on shopping, an issue talked about by the young couple:

James and I had a discussion about 'points' [...] I said that I did not use all my points and he thought that I ought to. He said that I should buy things while they were still obtainable.⁷⁴³

From then, Lillian bought commodities available, even if not needed, at once with her points, rather than lose them. She also learned to take advantage of any opportunity, for instance, buying a pound of coffee instead of their usual half-pound when she had the chance, as shortages were frequent.⁷⁴⁴ Like Lillian, the other diarists tested their possibilities out, having to take decisions according to their needs and desires. As time

⁷⁴² MOA D 5423, December 1942; MOA DR 2500, December 1943; MOA D 5201, December 1941.

⁷⁴³ MOA D 5239, January 1942.

⁷⁴⁴ MOA D 5239, March 1942.

went on and they got used to the system, shopping was planned and became more pragmatic. They would choose syrup to compensate for the sugar ration, for example, or tinned salmon as it would be better for meals and sandwiches.⁷⁴⁵ This planning was, according to James Vernon, a part of the new pedagogy meant to educate women about nutrition and better organisation in the kitchen. The regulation and control resulting from the rationing would help to plan food purchases, menus and cooking in a more efficient and healthy way.⁷⁴⁶ Such a plan is not obvious in the diaries. Even Lillian, who had to adapt to her new condition as a married woman, was already well aware of the management of a household. The diarists had to modify their habits and get used to the new regulations, but all of them already had nutritional knowledge and a sense of thriftiness.

The adaptation to challenging times did not only imply planning and thriftiness, it also included finding ways to get food; for many it meant a need to 'Dig for Victory'. The only way to compensate for the reduction of food importations was to increase home-grown food production. This would be done by the improvement and rationalisation of agriculture, but also through an individual involvement from the population. Therefore, the campaign 'Dig for Victory' was initiated in autumn 1939.⁷⁴⁷ Allotments and help were provided, especially in urban areas, in order to allow citizens to supplement their rations. The campaign was quite successful. The number of allotments increased significantly (from 815,000 in 1939 to 1,400,000 in 1943).⁷⁴⁸

Gardening and other ways to get food were used by the diarists. Lillian regularly went picking berries, hips and hazels or went mushrooming and had an allotment before moving to London.⁷⁴⁹ Celia had a garden and an allotment and Amelia dug a part of her

⁷⁴⁵ MOA D 5201, December 1941, August 1942; MOA D 5240, December 1941.

⁷⁴⁶ Vernon, *Hunger*, 223–24.

⁷⁴⁷ Ginn, F. "Dig for Victory! New Histories of Wartime Gardening in Britain." *Journal of Historical Geography* 38, no. 3 (2012), 296.

⁷⁴⁸ Wilt, *Food for War*, 189.

⁷⁴⁹ MOA D 5239, July, August, September, October 1941, July, August, September, October 1942, October 1943.

garden to grow vegetables in summer 1940.⁷⁵⁰ Robert was the most dedicated of the eight diarists concerning providing their own food. He was very committed to their garden (possibly he already was before the war) as demonstrated by the numerous mentions about it and the quantity of the crops produced (hard work said to be worth it in wartime).⁷⁵¹ However, his main move to self-sufficiency came with chickens. His decision was progressive. After months of shortages and excessive prices, he and his wife initially decided to go without eggs as far as possible. Then, in July 1941, he took the matter in his own hands and bought a dozen chicks. A few months later he announced a 'red-letter day', when they got their first egg. His flock was quite substantial, as stated by his comments and the numerous eggs given to their closest family and their own consumption. In October 1943, he reported that 120 eggs were used for their private use only, indicating a good protein intake despite the restrictions.⁷⁵² Norma grew food and had chickens too, but the similarity ends there. Norma and her family got vegetables and fruits from the farm they possessed, as well as meat and fish from hunting and fishing on their estate. She had help (a gardener and Land Girls) and did not dedicate all her free time to it, in contrast to Robert. On the other hand as a farm owner, she had to register when egg distribution went under control and could not keep all the eggs she wanted.⁷⁵³ Nonetheless, despite such restrictions, the estate and the farm provided plenty of commodities to reduce the impact of the war on their eating habits by improving and varying their diet.

As expected, the diarists adapted their practices to their possibilities. Edna, for instance, had neither the opportunity nor the time to grow vegetables, while Clara used her front and back gardens to plant what she could. However, the effort was also related to need. While Robert's family depended on their garden and hens to ease the situation, Irene did not and consequently lack the motivation to act. She had the means to eat out in luxury

⁷⁵⁰ MOA D 5240 August 1940.

⁷⁵¹ MOA D 5201, November 1939, July, September 1940, May, October 1941, June 1942, October 1943.

⁷⁵² MOA D 5201, August, September, October, November, December 1940, July, December 1941,; March, June 1942, January, October 1943.

⁷⁵³ MOA D 5378, June 1941.

restaurants on a very regular basis, an opportunity she took advantage of, easing the rationing as well as getting a more varied diet than most of the other diarists. Her example validates the idea that the upper class had more occasions to get home-grown food because they often possessed larger ornamental gardens which could be turned to crops and the free time needed to do gardening. Still, it also demonstrates that the opportunity was not always taken despite the potential benefit and Government propaganda.⁷⁵⁴ She was aware of the judgement such lack of involvement could provoke. In spring 1942, she claimed to feel guilty about not doing anything for the war effort, and not using her garden to grow vegetables or keep poultry as 'homework' for the national cause, justifying herself through a weak physical condition and feeling too frustrated, dispirited and disgruntled to make any effort.⁷⁵⁵

Such feeling of discouragement was quite common in the diaries, especially after 1942, another illustration of the impact of time passing on the population.

Exhausting Time

Time helped the diarists to adapt, whether by organising themselves or getting accustomed to the new situations and regulations. From that perspective time could be understood rather positively. On the other hand, defined as duration, it had rather a negative impact on the diarists by 'wearing them out'. Food difficulties, from this angle, can be associated to the concept of a war of attrition as it exhausted the population.

As previously discussed, the complaints made about health issues were especially significant between mid-1942 and the end of 1943. This is not to say that these complaints disappeared after this time. In 1944 and 1945 remarks concerning health issues, feeling depressed and exhausted were made by various diarists, sometimes recurrently (Norma).⁷⁵⁶ Lillian expressed her fatigue and, like Norma, she wrote of being so tired that

⁷⁵⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?"; Brassley and Potter, "A View From the Top"

⁷⁵⁵ MOA D 5427, April, May 1942.

⁷⁵⁶ MOA D 5378 June 1944; June 1945.

she could not do any work.⁷⁵⁷ The postponed demobilisation and the news about ongoing fatalities worsened her depression, but the time passing was her major reason to feel down:

I have been feeling utterly depressed this evening because I am 30 tomorrow, and there seems no hope of J. being home for about a year, and goodness knows when I shall be able to start my family.⁷⁵⁸

The constant efforts needed to respond to the food difficulties were a significant worsening factor to add to the war-related ones. The relationship between war, food and mood is perceptible in the testimony of Edna, who wrote feeling better because she could get more fruits and vitamins, but also happy, because 'life is back to normal again'.⁷⁵⁹ This is not to say that those feeling disheartened were not glad and relieved by the end of the war, but six years of stress, anxiety, efforts, privations and frustration impacted the body and the mind of these diarists, and presumably on most of the population.⁷⁶⁰ In addition, the expected days to come were not to ameliorate morale. As stated by David Kynaston: 'one word above all characterised life in immediate post-war Britain: austerity'.⁷⁶¹

Conclusion

This chapter has exposed the multifaceted dimension of the impact of the Second World War food situation on the diet and eating habits of the diarists, their perspectives and behaviours. The evidence found in the diaries shows that the shortages and restrictions of most commodities generated alterations in food practices, but the extent of these changes and their perceptions depended on individual pre-war habits, social background, personal situation and the moment of time examined.

⁷⁵⁷ MOA D 5239, June 1945.

⁷⁵⁸ MOA D 5239, September 1945.

⁷⁵⁹ MOA D 5390, May 1945.

⁷⁶⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 121–122.

⁷⁶¹ Kynaston, David. *Austerity Britain, 1945-51*. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Walker & Co., 2008, 103.

Food scarcity was definitely an engine of change regarding eating habits and diet quality, but it also impacted upon the role and value of food, as well as people's manners and perspectives. This was established through the new appreciation and apprehension of food issues by the diarists, the emergence of feelings and social rules unlikely to have existed prior to the war and the development of new behaviours. The higher value and the new role acquired by scarce commodities are especially eloquent. Gifts of food, exchanges and the black market are all evidence of the adaptation of the diarists, and presumably most of the population, to wartime food restrictions and shortages.

Regarding social class, the findings confirm the difficulties engendered by the food restrictions and their greater importance for the middle classes due to a decreased purchasing power and/or pre-war food habits being more difficult to satisfy.⁷⁶² They also reveal the correlation between the level of the diarists within the social scale and the degree of the difficulties, adaptation and attitude to the wartime food situation. Those with higher incomes would compensate the restrictions more easily than those with a tight budget, who would suffer more greatly from the food restrictions. However, the study also reveals the existence of a middle-class paradox: the eating habits of the higher socio-economic group was more affected as they were used to a greater variety and better quality of food than what was mainly available during the war. In contrast, those from less-advantaged backgrounds suffered fewer disturbances to their diet. This difference influenced the appreciation of the situation by the diarists and consequently their narratives. Interestingly, the persistence of pre-war prejudices co-existed with the

⁷⁶² This is not to say that working-class household did not suffer from the wartime food situation. The rationing of meat, bacon and cheese for instance was a source of complaints from male workers in industry. However, the availability of bread and potatoes permitted the lower income groups to maintain their usual diet. The pre-war unfairness of distribution persisted during the war as higher income groups still got more than lower income ones and the flat-rate ration disadvantaged heavy workers and families with teenagers. Nonetheless, based on the testimonies analysed, concerning the specific question of eating habits, the middle-class diet suffered greater changes (including maybe new responsibilities and new difficulties), especially for those without access to garden or allotment, and/or with a limited budget. Such affirmation is nuanced by the fact that no diarist was a factory or unskilled worker, thus the opinion of this social group was not found in the sources examined. However it is supported by other research: the negative impact of the wartime food situation on the high income group is evident in Nelson's study for instance. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 73–6; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Fair Shares?"; Nelson, "Social-Class Trends in British Diet."

need to accept commodities that would not be chosen in normal times, proving the existence of personal limits to one's adaptation and the continuation of social distinctions despite the situation. However, one element could dominate another. The prioritising of children, for instance, demonstrates the significance of personal characteristics in the understanding of food issues.

The testimonies from parents establish the significant influence of having children on perspectives and behaviours. The same can be said for the housewife responsible for providing her husband and family with decent meals, despite challenging circumstances. Personal circumstances would also affect the management of the food situation. Being single meant less possibility to adjust to the restrictions, while having a family meant more opportunity to combine rations. On the other hand, having a family meant a higher level of responsibility, while people on their own had only to look after themselves. It is visible that the concern with food was quite self-centred in the narratives of single diarists, but a greater source of anxiety for those in charge of a family. From that point of view, the personal status (taking into account the impact of the financial factor on the potential adaptation and response to difficulties) seems to reduce social difference between the diarists through their mutual worries and struggles. However, for diarists with or without children, the importance of food is especially manifest between 1940 and 1942, indicating the importance of time in the process, regardless of personal situation.

The role of time as a factor of adaptation and evolution is flagrant, as demonstrated by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the mentions about food made by the diarists. It is also evident that the wartime life was a succession of elements with variable levels of significance at different periods. The war and the food situations evolved, impacting the everyday life matters, priorities and the feelings of the population. The progression of the perspective between 1939 and 1945 is noticeable, either related to that particular time and events, or the resulting of duration of the war. Additionally, the time needed to implement a regulation and feel its effects (or to harvest the fruits of the efforts in the

garden) has to be taken into account as it explains, at least partially, the improvement of the food situation after 1942.

As noticeable in the analysis, these factors intertwine, demonstrating the soundness of the multifactor approach defended in this thesis. The study of Edna and the black market, for instance, reveals the influence of the combination of her personal principles, middle-class habits, frustration and the duration of the war had on the evolution of her practices and her perception of them. The testimonies concerning the black market validate Roodhouse's assertion that, while many felt uneasy about their illicit purchases, others felt entitled to have more. This last feeling was perceptible in Irene's testimony about herself and her friends, suggesting a tendency related to her higher social position. Such behaviour and the scale of the black market question the success of the fair share propaganda and support the opposition between 'public vehement condemnation and universal personal indulgence', presented by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska.⁷⁶³ The responses to the wartime shortages and a more self-centred or opportunistic perspective also challenge the idea of a nation united against the enemy and helping each other. Support existed in the testimonies, but was mainly given to family and friends. Moreover, pre-existing tensions or animosities could be exacerbated by the diminution of resources. The testimonies also question the idea of a 'wartime egalitarianism' that 'promoted social solidarity'.⁷⁶⁴ Scarcity, by increasing food value, actually reduced generosity (at least beyond the closer circles) and established new forms of exchange that probably replaced pre-war free donations. Moreover, pre-war social habits and prejudices persisted regardless of the new circumstances.

The thematic analysis of the narratives established the validity of the argument defended in this thesis, as well as the key role played by food as regards the home front management and the everyday lives of the population. Additionally, it establishes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach of such topics and shows the interest to

⁷⁶³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 157.

⁷⁶⁴ Fielding, "The Good War", 26.

include microanalysis to macro history in order to nuance generalities and refine the historical perception of the wartime food situation. The war was not a single, short episode and neither the population nor a specific group was homogeneous.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The key objectives of this research have been to offer a better understanding of the impact of the war on the everyday food practices of British civilians, its consequences on their behaviours and perspectives, as well as a better knowledge of their adaptation to challenging circumstances. Making the testimonies of these witnesses more accessible through the presentation of their narrative was another of its purpose and it has also aimed to contribute new data and evidence regarding wartime everyday life and the food situation. In addition to adding to the historical knowledge about the British home front, this study also demonstrates that the formation of specific wartime eating habits did not simply arise as a result of food restrictions, but were the product of various factors related to pre-war circumstances, which were transformed, to various extents, by wartime conditions. In other words, it has been argued that while scarcity had a significant impact on the food practices of diarists, others elements, namely time, social class and personal circumstances were decisive regarding their food choices, their adaptation, and their priorities.

Two distinct set of data from Mass Observation have been analysed in order to validate, or invalidate, such arguments: The replies to a questionnaire (Directive) related to the wartime eating habits and eight wartime diaries. The mixed methodology used to examine and analyse these sources allowed the creation of quantitative data that could be measured and compared. These data were of great interest, as they allowed the determination of important information about the eating habits, preference and feelings of the diarists. However, without their counter-part, the qualitative analysis of the sources, these data could not have been entirely apprehended. The qualitative analysis offered the context and personal perspective, essential to comprehend figures and tables, but also to understand the complexity of the wartime food situation on a day-to-day basis. Qualitative data revealed the variety of realities and perspectives that could exist within the diarists and the relationship between such realities and the role of the factor of

influence discussed in this thesis. The qualitative analysis also allowed for the examination of the similarities and the divergence between the diarists and, again, the influence of their social class and familial status in the process.

Nevertheless, this research relates to the country and the diarists' pre-war and wartime context as well. The impact of the war on people's food practises can only be understood in relation to their previous habits and consequently, the elements that shaped British food practices as well as the events that challenged them have been explained. Regarding the Middle-classes specifically, the thesis offers a comparative study of food surveys that gave insights to their diet prior to the war, allowing an evaluation of the wartime changes on their habits. This historical and social contextualisation has been presented in the first chapter of the thesis, along with the description of the sources used and the methodology employed to analyse them. The second chapter has presented the research conducted on the Mass Observation replies and diaries, while the third chapter discussed the various factors that influenced the wartime food practices of the diarists. This concluding section firstly recapitulates the finding of this study, then discusses its limitations and finally introduces the potential further research that could complete and extend it.

The essential role of scarcity as an instrument of change regarding food practices, manners and perspectives of the diarists has been demonstrated through the analysis of their testimonies. However, this analysis also validated the considerable influences of other factors, specifically time, social class and personal priorities. The testimonies of the diarists showed that food acquired a new value, status and role, while their behaviours and opinions often changed in accordance with the evolution of the war, the food situation, the personal pre-war habits and the familial circumstances. These testimonies and more particularly their complaints also revealed the difficulties faced and the degradation of their diet that contrasts with the analysis of the 248 replies of 1943 that revealed a surprising impression that the eating habits of the respondents did not change

significantly. However, such impression has been explained by the role of time as a factor for adaptation, reinforcing the arguments advanced in this thesis.

The weight of social class on the eating habits and food choices of the respondents and the diarists has proved to be particularly significant. The analysis of both sources has indicated a shift to a more working-class type diet for these respondents and the diarists. The limitation of food availability did render the respondent less choosy, inducing a 'taste of necessity' probably not common prior to the war. Commodities that were previously despised had often become more appealing, although within individual limits as demonstrated by the occasional rejection of socially connoted products. The unexpected importance of fruit is another evidence of the accuracy of a social-class angle of research as key of comprehension concerning food consumption. Nonetheless, the other factors involved in the wartime food habits and priorities have to be taken into account, the familial situation in particular. As demonstrated in this study, having a spouse and/or children was a main dimension regarding the priorities, and behaviours, of the diarists.

In addition to offering an intimate insight of the wartime food circumstances, the findings presented in this thesis also introduces new dimensions in the popular perception of the Home Front. For instance, within the material I looked at, evidence has shown that mutual assistance was primarily present within family or to some extent between friends, challenging the vision of a population united against the enemy and the war as a time of solidarity. The various comments made by the diarists also indicated that the war did not change the pre-war social division, including food habits and prejudices. The results of this study also enlighten debated issues such as the impact of the rationing and the educational propaganda on the improvement of the British diet during the war and the importance of governmental nutritional schemes on the wartime food management. The evidence found in the narratives have confirmed that the diet of the middle-classes significantly suffered as a result of the wartime restriction, due to a higher degree of privation compared to their pre-war habits either resulting from food shortages, the

disappearance of their usual ingredients and/or a lack of financial means to compensate the increase of goods price.

As regard to governmental measures, the findings have shown that these middle-class diarists were not particularly interested in nutritional propaganda, essentially because they already had nutritional knowledge, another mark of their social class. Despite the risk of nutritional deficit resulting from the wartime diet, only parents from the lower middle-class used the vitamin scheme, indicating their knowledge on the matter, while the upper-middle class parents managed their children's diet by themselves.

The remarks of these parents, concerning the under-use of the vitamin scheme support historian's claims that it was a half-success. The opportunity to get off-ration food in British Restaurants was not taken either, mainly due to a personal distaste of the diarists for the food, indicating that preference rather than pragmatism was still very present despite the circumstances. The testimonies also confirmed that restaurants, hotels and cafes were most often full of customers, indicating their role as wartime food provider to the population. However, the habits of these eight diarists did not seem to have drastically changed, challenging a common idea that middle-class compensated for rationing by eating out. The evidence found in these diaries is also not consistent with the idea that the better off had more free food by growing vegetables in their garden and keeping hens. The most involved diarist was working class, while the upper-class one, despite her opportunity and means, preferred to ease her situation by eating in restaurant or using the black market rather than digging for victory. Evidently, it would be dishonest to generalise such result. Despite the fact that the friends of this diarists seemed to have behaved similarly, other upper-class did use their outdoor spaces to grow up vegetables, while the urban working class could or would not, have a garden or an allotment. A single example, even if revelatory, must remain limited to a micro-historical perspective as well as the limitation of my sample size must be acknowledged.

The examination of these primary sources offers a unique insight of the wartime lives, worries or priorities of the diarists and a depth analysis of a material sometimes considered as unworkable in such ways. Nonetheless, as with any research, this project encountered a number of limitations that need to be considered. The first and main one is the small scale of sources used. Without doubt, the experience of eight diarists or 248 respondents can not be considered as representative of the whole population, or the middle-classes. Another issue would be the individual character of the narratives, making it difficult to standardise the data, a problem made worse by the potential subjective interpretation of the testimonies. These limitations have been taken into account during the research. The two main sources have been supported by additional material while the findings have been compared to other sources for instance. The anonymous diaries selection process and the mixed methodology used to analyse the sources also helped to reduce my personal potential preconceived notion about the age and gender of the diarists to chose and improved an objective categorisation of the data. Concerning the lack of representativeness, the comparison between the diarists showed individual differences, but also significant similarities either of experience, emotions, or priorities that could have been, in all probability, shared by other civilians, as future research could reveal.

This thesis has explored what can be achieved through the analysis of the qualitative material from Mass Observation Archive, offering a taste of the richness of its resources and its research possibilities, but also a methodological model of analysis that allows the management of such sources. This tailor-made method, adaptable to a large variety of research topic, is a main contribution of this study for researchers interested in such material. In the same way that this methodology has been used for this research, it could be employed for further investigations.

Firstly, in addition to pursuing the present work with additional diaries, a study of the post-war period using the same sources and methodology would be a great continuation

of this thesis. Indeed, as stated by Anne Murcott, eating habits changed considerably in Britain after 1945.⁷⁶⁵ The end of the war was firstly followed by a long period of austerity as rationing ended in 1954 only. The post-war rationing (that included the rationing of bread and potatoes and was considered as worse as the wartime rationing) was a source of resentment for the population. It has political consequences, but also consequences for food practices.⁷⁶⁶ The post-war black market, discussed by various authors already, could be examined through the analysis of its perception by contemporary eye-witnesses.⁷⁶⁷ The emergence of a time of affluence and the arrival of many new commodities, convenience food and foreign food by early 1950s and during the 1960s is perhaps the most significant engine of change regarding the British eating habits and diet. However, the extent of such changes and the factors that could have influenced them has yet to be explored. Post-war social and demographic changes, the increase of married women working, but also the development of new kitchen appliances are all potential elements involved in new food practices.⁷⁶⁸ Nevertheless, beyond the statistics about post-war food consumption found in sources such as *The Food We Eat* or Buss' study about the post-war British diet, qualitative data analysis would provide inestimable information about the impact of post-war austerity and prosperity on the everyday life practices of ordinary British citizens.⁷⁶⁹

Secondly, similar research using qualitative data that includes personal testimonies in other countries would also be illuminating as regards the impact of the war on everyday life and food practices from a transnational perspective. Research on the wartime food management and the effects of wartime food difficulties on the population of non-invaded countries such as the Switzerland or Australia would offer interesting material to

⁷⁶⁵ Murcott, Anne. "Food and Nutrition in Post-War Britain." In *Understanding Post-War British Society*, James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall eds., 155–64. London; New York: Routledge, 1994, 155.

⁷⁶⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Bread Rationing".

⁷⁶⁷ Addison, Paul. *No Turning Back : The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 54; Addison, Paul, and British Broadcasting Corporation. *Now the War Is over: A Social History of Britain, 1945-51*. London: British Broadcasting Corp. : J. Cape, 1985, 46; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*; Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain*.

⁷⁶⁸ Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, 335; Kynaston, *Austerity Britain*, 512; Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, 173–8.

⁷⁶⁹ Besides, it would be fascinating to discover the post-war experiences, the evolution of attitude, and eating habits of the diarists whose wartime testimonies had been analysed in this study.

compare to the British experience. In the same vein, a research on occupied countries (France, but also less studied ones such as Denmark, Belgium or the Netherlands) would also be of great interest in the field of history, but also food studies and in all probability sociology.

A third subject of interest, even if less related to food, would be a study focusing on male diarists. While the testimonies examined confirm that the weight of food management was mainly on women's shoulders, the analysis of the married diarists revealed a new or increased form of collaboration between spouses. This finding questions the role played by men in the household and suggests it worth looking at wartime husband and father.

As a final point, undeniably, food was a major dimension of the home front, for the government as well as the population. It was a constant issue for those who had to provide three meals a day while facing rationing, shortage or the disappearance of most of their usual ingredients. Food scarcity not only compromised health and even survival, but also modified human relationships to each other and to the food itself. Despite this social dimension, the historical focus on the relationship between food and the British Home Front has essentially been on nutrition, public health and policies while the everyday management of food has been quite secondary or anecdotic.⁷⁷⁰ Moreover, these studies often consider the country, the population or a social group as a homogeneous whole. They offer precious data and information about the general situation, but a more personal and specific portrayal of the everyday day wartime reality and a depth analysis of wartime narrative are missing. Besides, there is not much room for middle-class experience in histories of the Second World War as studies mainly concentrates on the impact of rationing and governmental measures on lower income households.

In contrast, this thesis, which focuses mainly on the historically under-represented middle-classes, has incorporated micro history and the everyday life food management

⁷⁷⁰ Trentmann and Just, *Food and Conflict in Europe*, 2.

into the study the Kitchen Front. Food is observed from the perspective of those facing the consequences of the war on their personal situation, offering new data and a more intimate vision to the usual wartime observation. Doing so, it fills a gap in history, offering valuable insight on the British Home Front as well as the interaction of the various factors involved in food practices and eating habits in time of crisis.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Example of data categorization Replies of Directive April 1943

No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital status	Occupation	Change in diet	Eat less of	Eat more of	New food	change in tastes	Missed food	place of eating before	Place of eating 1943	food before the war	food in 1943	Remarks
1200	M	1902	41	S	Forces	III		Potatoes, corn beef, bread, pudding rice, tea								in the army
1211	M	1898	45	M	office work	III	little		vegetables				London meals service restaurant			
1234	M	1906	37	M	electrician	III	butter, milk, sugar	pies sausages potatoes cabbage carrots			fruits					vegetarian
1248	M	1883	60	M	postmaster	III	meat, sweets, fruits									own hens
1264	M	1916	27	S	journalist + forces	II	meat, eggs						canteen, cheap cafes	supper (late)/cold meat, cheese, pickles	Breakfast: porridge, bacon, fried bread, buttered bread. Supper in the (earlier) army canteen	army
1313	F	1891	52	R	teacher	II		bacon, margarine	Cocoa				canteen	Breakfast: tea, toast. Evening meal: soup, meat, pudding	Breakfast: ham, kippers, eggs, fish. Lunch: thick soup or minced vegetable, bread, cheese. High tea: sandwiches, cooked meat	became less faddy about food, eat what can get

Appendix 3: List of diaries selected by type of matching keywords (**selected diaries in bold**)

Diarist No	Food	Meals	Diet	Starch food	Fruits	Vegetables	Protein foods	Milk	Sugar /sweet			Restaurants	Black Market
5390	11 food	meals/lunch			fruit		meat	milk	sugar	chocolate	cake (s)	restaurant	black market
5376	10 food	meals/dinner			fruit	vegetables	meat	milk	sugar	chocolate			black market
5423	10 food	dinner	diet		fruit			milk	sugar			sweet	black market
5239	10 food		diet	bread	fruit		meat egg	milk	sugar	chocolate			black market
5240	10 food	meals		bread	fruit		meat	milk	sugar			sweet	black market
5353	9 food	meals/dinner			fruit	vegetables		milk	sugar	chocolate		sweet	
5261	9 food			bread	fruit		meat	milk	sugar	chocolate			black market
5318	9 food	dinner		bread			meat	milk	sugar	chocolate	cake (s)	restaurant	black market
5378	9 food			potatoes	fruit		meat	milk	sugar	chocolate			black market
5076	9 food	dinner		bread			meat	milk	sugar	chocolate	biscuits	sweet	black market
5451	8 food			bread			meat	milk	sugar				black market
5282	8 food		diet	potatoes			meat		sugar	chocolate			black market
5420	8 food	lunch			fruit	vegetables	meat		sugar		cake (s)	restaurant	
5205	8 food		diet		fruit			milk	sugar	chocolate		restaurant	black market
5402	8 food		diet	bread	fruit			cheese milk		chocolate		restaurant	
5301	7 food			bread			meat	milk	sugar			sweet	black market
5318.1	7 food		diet	bread	fruit		meat	milk				sweet	
5342	7 food	meals				vegetables		milk	sugar	chocolate		restaurant	
5296	7 food			bread	fruit			milk	sugar				black market
5338	7 food				fruit				sugar	chocolate		restaurant	black market
5201	7 food				fruit				sugar	chocolate		sweet	black market
5427	7 food			bread				milk	sugar	chocolate		sweet	black market
5412	7 food			bread	fruit			milk				sweet	black market
5010	7 food	menu		potatoes		vegetables			sugar	chocolate			
5447	6 food			bread	fruit							restaurant	black market
5331	6 food			bread	fruit			milk	sugar			sweet	
5399	6 food		diet		fruit					chocolate		restaurant	black market
5325	6 food	dinner/menu					meat						black market
5065	6 food			bread			meat	milk	sugar			restaurant	

Appendix 1: Provenance of food (in thousand tons)Source: Hammond, *Food*, p. 395

Commodity group	1934-38		1944	
	Import	Main sources	Import	Main sources
Wheat and flour	5'451	Canada; Australia; Argentina	3'615	Canada; Argentina
Rice, grains, pulses	1'403	Canada; Continental Europe; USA; South America; Soviet Union; Iraq; Iran	137	USA; Argentina; Brazil
Meat (all incl.)	1'546	Argentina; Australia; New Zealand; Denmark	1'796	Argentina; USA; Canada; Australia; New Zealand
Fats	1'917	Egypt; Sudan; British Indian, Burma; Ceylon; British West Africa; Argentina; Brazil	1'975	British West Africa; British India; Burma; Ceylon; Argentina; French, West and Equatorial Africa
Sugar	2'168	Cuba; Dominican Republic; Australia; Mauritius; British West Indies; British Guinea	1'155	Cuba; Dominican Republic; Union of South Africa; Mauritius; British West Indies; British Guinea
Dairy product	935	Continental Europe; Soviet Union; Australia; New Zealand	685	USA; Canada; Australia; New Zealand
Fruit and vegetables (all incl.)	2'639	Europe incl. Soviet Union, Chanel Island, Eire and Canary Island; British West Indies, Palestine, Brazil; USA	649	USA; Europe incl. Soviet Union, Chanel Island, Eire and Canary Island; Union South Africa; Palestine; Turkey; Iraq; Australia; Canada

Appendix 2: Imports of food/animals feeding-stuffs into the United Kingdom in thousand tons
Source: Hammond, *Food*, p. 392

Commodity	1934-38 Average	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Wheat	5'031	5'754	5'393	3'487	3'256	2'824	3'552
Wheatmeal and flour	420	577	708	374	718	791	543
Rice, grains and pulses	1'403	1'077	514	163	257	137	340
Maize and maize meal	3'395	2'192	702	15	66	118	510
Oilcake	595	417	204	55		68	190
Other animals feeding-stuffs	1'147	648	120	19	12	30	10
Meat (incl. carcasses)	1'096	1'128	1'073	1'047	1'051	1'182	832
Bacon and Ham	387	241	281	362	387	408	244
Canned meat	63	122	226	249	246	206	97
Oil seeds and nuts	1'522	1'630	1'506	1'361	1'621	1'468	1'055
Oil and fats (excl. whale oil unrefined)	395	366	438	539	542	507	304
Whale oil unrefined	88	82	31	42	14		39
Sugar	2'168	1'526	1'652	768	1'425	1'155	1'066
Butter	480	264	218	134	152	153	190
Cheese	142	156	203	315	207	252	191
Processed milk	104	87	167	261	223	177	96
Eggs in shell	159	99	59	23	15	23	48
Other dairy products	50	42	48	65	74	80	37
Dried fruits	175	128	210	198	181	253	155
Fresh fruits (incl. nuts)	1'502	839	115	131	58	213	398
Canned and preserved fruit, pulp and juices	257	202	112	114	72	125	87
Vegetables (incl. canned)	705	392	105	67	23	58	79
Tea, Coffee, cocoa	346	370	371	344	422	381	321
Other foods	861	847	609	584	591	546	591
Total	22'491	19'186	15'066	10'837	11'613	11'155	10'975

Appendix 3: Data extracted from Massey Survey

Average expenditures per household of food										
	£250-350		£350-500		£500-700		£700 +		All	
Items/costs	s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d
Bread	1	7.25	1	10	1	11.75	2	3.5	1	9.25
Flour	0	6.25	0	6.5	0	7	0	6.5	0	6.5
Buns, cakes, pastries, etc.	1	2.5	1	5	1	7.75	2	1.5	1	4.75
Biscuits	0	8.5	0	10.75	1	0.75	0	11.5	0	10
Proprietary cereals	0	3.25	0	4	0	3.5	0	6.75	0	3.75
Oatmeal	0	1	0	1.25	0	2	0	1.5	0	1.25
Rice, sago, macaroni etc...	0	1.25	0	1.25	0	1.25	0	1.25	0	1.25
Total bread	4	6	5	2.75	5	10.25	6	5.25	5	0.75
Beef and veal	2	3.25	2	9.75	3	4.25	3	7.25	2	8.25
Mutton and lamb	1	7.25	2	0.5	2	3.75	2	10	1	11
Pork	0	4.75	0	5.5	0	4.75	0	5	0	5
Canned and potted meat	0	3	0	4	0	3.75	0	4	0	3.5
Sausages and meat pies	0	6.5	0	8.25	0	10	1	0.75	0	8
Offal	0	3.5	0	3.75	0	4.5	0	5.75	0	4
Rabbit, poultry etc..	0	4	0	5.5	0	7	1	2	0	5.5
Bacon and ham	1	7	1	9.75	2	2	2	3	1	9.5
Fish (fresh)	0	9.5	0	11.5	1	4.5	1	9	0	11.8
Fish (dried and cured)	0	2	0	2.75	0	4	0	4.25	0	2.5
Fish (canned and paste)	0	4.25	0	4.5	0	5	0	4.25	0	4.5
Fish (fried and chips)	0	1.75	0	1.5	0	0.75	0	0.25	0	1.5
Total meat/fish	8	8.75	10	7	12	6.25	14	7.5	10	3
Milk (excl. away from home)	4	1	4	9	5	5.75	6	1.5	4	7.5
Milk, condensed	0	0.75	0	0.75	0	0.75	0	1.25	0	0.75
Milk, dried, preparation	0	2.75	0	3	0	2.5	0	1.5	0	2.75
Cream	0	2.5	0	3	0	4.25	0	6.5	0	3
Butter	2	4.75	2	9	3	1.25	3	3.5	2	8
Margarine	0	2.75	0	2.75	0	3	0	3.25	0	2.75
Lard	0	2.5	0	2.5	0	2	0	2.25	0	2.25
Suet (incl. Dripping etc..)	0	2	0	2.5	0	2.75	0	2.5	0	2.25
Cheese	0	6.5	0	6.75	0	7.75	0	8.5	0	6.75
Eggs	1	11.3	2	3	2	10.75	3	2	2	3
Total dairies	10	0.75	11	6	13	4.25	14	8.75	11	3
Tea	1	3.75	1	5.25	1	6.5	1	7.5	1	5

Cocoa	0	1.75	0	1.75	0	1	0	0.75	0	1.75
Coffee	0	1.75	0	2.5	0	3.25	0	5.5	0	2.5
Total beverages	1	6.75	1	9	1	10.75	2	1.75	1	8.75
Sugar	0	10.3	1	0.75	1	2.5	1	3.25	0	11.8
Jam, marmalade etc..	0	5	0	5.5	0	6.5	0	8.25	0	5.5
Syrup, treacle, honey	0	1.25	0	1.75	0	2	0	3	0	1.75
Total sugar etc..	1	4.75	1	7.5	1	11	2	2.5	1	7
Potatoes	0	9	0	10.25	0	11.25	1	0.75	0	10
Vegetables (cabbage, broccoli)	0	3.75	0	4	0	4.75	0	7	0	4.75
Beans and peas (fresh)	0	1.75	0	2.75	0	2.5	0	3.25	0	2
Salad, herbs	0	1.75	0	2.75	0	3	0	3.75	0	2.25
Dried legumes	0	0.75	0	0.75	0	0.75	0	0.75	0	0.75
Tomatoes	0	5	0	6	0	7.5	0	7	0	5.75
Vegetables (roots)	0	2.75	0	3.25	0	3.75	0	4.75	0	3.75
Onion, leeks, shallot	0	1.5	0	1.75	0	1.75	0	2	0	1.75
Canned, bottled vegetables	0	1.75	0	2.25	0	3	0	3.5	0	2.75
Total vegetable	2	4	2	8.75	3	2.25	3	9	2	8
Apples	0	7.25	0	9	0	11.75	1	0	0	8.75
Oranges	0	7	0	8.25	0	9.5	0	10	0	8
Pineapple	0	3.5	0	4.25	0	5	0	5.25	0	4.5
Other fresh fruits and nuts	0	8.5	0	10.5	1	3.75	1	6	0	10.8
Canned, bottled fruits	0	4.75	0	6	0	8.5	0	9.25	0	6
Total fruits	2	11.5	3	7.75	4	10	5	2	3	1.25
Sweets, chocolate, ice cream..	0	8	0	10.25	0	11.75	1	1	0	9.5
Malt, cold liver oil ...	0	2.25	0	1.5	0	2	0	2.75	0	2
Miscellaneous	0	9.75	1	0.25	1	3.5	1	5.75	1	0
Total other foods	1	8	2	0	2	5.25	2	9.5	1	11.5
Foods away from home										
At school meal	0	1	0	2.75	0	7.75	0	7	0	3
At school milk	0	0.75	0	1	0	1	0	0.5	0	1
Other foods	0	0	0	0.25	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.25
Midday meals	1	5	1	10	4	3.5	8	6.5	2	4
Other meals	0	9	0	10.25	1	6.5	3	3.5	1	0.25
Milk	0	0.5	0	0.25	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.25
Total foods away from home	2	4.25	3	0.5	6	7.25	12	6.5	3	8.75
Total (all incl.)	33	6.75	42	1.25	52	7.25	64	6.75	41	10

Appendix 4: Data extracted from the Crawford Study

Weekly expenses 'per caput'										
	EXPENDITURES (d)					CONSUMPTION (oz/Lb)				
	AA	A	B	C	D	AA	A	B	C	D
Bread	7.6	7.6	7.8	8.1	8.7	48	48.2	49.6	54.9	62.4
Incl. brown bread						10.1	9.5	8.4	3.4	2.1
Meat (incl. offal, poultry, rabbit, tinned meat etc...)	58.4	51.1	38.1	23.6	16.7	53.3	49.5	43.1	34.6	30.4
Beef and veal	15.5	13.1	11.5	7.7	5.55	19.4	13.3	13.1	11.3	10.4
Mutton and Lamb	11.8	9.9	7.6	4.5	3	12	11	9	6.6	5.2
Pork (incl. sausages, bacon and ham)	13.7	12.4	10.8	6.8	4.2	12.3	11.9	10.9	8	5.7
Pork (incl. sausage; excl bacon and ham)	6.6	6.1	5	2.8	1.4					
Pork sausages						2.4	2.6	1.7	0.95	0.45
Beef sausages						0.3	0.3	0.3	2	2.75
Bacon/ ham	7.1	6.3	5.8	4	2.8	6.4	6	6.1	4.5	3.6
Eggs	11.2	10.4	9.3	5.8	3.6	6.6	6.2	5.5	3.8	2.6
Fresh /dried Fish	12.7	9.9	7	2.9	2.3	10	8.6	9.9	6.1	4.8
Tinned Fish	2.3	2.3	1.8	1.1	0.6					
Butter	10.9	10.2	9.1	6	3.6	11.6	11.3	10.3	7.2	4.5
Margarine	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.4	2.4	3.7
Cooking fat	2.2	1.9	1.5	1.2	0.9	0.225	0.2125	0.1875	0.1625	0.125
Cheese	2.8	2.7	2.2	1.6	1.2	3.3	3.3	3	2.7	2.1
Fruit (all)	19.3	17.2	12.9	5.5	2.5					
Fresh Fruit	15.3	12.9	9.9	3.9	1.7					
Dried Fruit	1.7	1.7	1.3	0.7	0.4	3.2	3.2	2.9	1.7	0.9
Tinned Fruit	2.3	2.4	1.71	0.4						
Sugar	3.2	3	2.7	2.6	2.3	17.6	17.9	17.2	16.8	15.2
Tea	8.6	7.1	6	5.2	4.5	4.5	3.9	3.3	3.4	3.4
Coffee	3.8	2.8	1.5	0.5	0.2					

Appendix 5: List of respondents with demographic information to Directive Reply April 1943

No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital status	Diary
1014	F	1885	58	S	
1015	F	1875	68	W	5325
1016	F	1887	56	M	5296
1018	F	1910	33	S	5296
1046	F	1891	52	M	5438
1048	F	1897	46	S	5240
1052	F	1892	51	S	5463
1056	F	1882	61	S	5402
1061	F	1889	54	M	5353
1066	F	1906	37	S	5245
1069	F	1879	64	S	
1074	M	1866	77	D	5098
1078	F	1900	43	S	5376
1079	F	1891	52	M	5282
1094	M	1902	41	M	
1098	M	1880	63	R	5180
1109	M	1882	61	S	
1161	M	1907	36	M	5201
1165	M	1906	37	M	
1190	M	1872	71	M	5033
1200	M	1902	41	S	
1211	M	1898	45	M	5092
1234	M	1906	37	M	5111
1248	M	1883	60	M	5058
1264	M	1916	27	S	5010
1270	M	1904	39	M	5220
1313	F	1891	52	R	5412
1325	M	1908	35	M	5103
1329	F	1907	36	S	5276
1345	M	1917	26	M	
1346	F	1916	27	M	5239
1362	F	1900	43	M	5445
1372	M		25	S	
1393	M	1909	34	M	5152
1403	M	1892	51	M	5193
1432	F	1917	26	S	
1478	M	1921	22	S	5143
1490	F	1914	29	M	5395
1534	F	1897	46	M	5378
1553	F	1899	44	M	
1563	F	1898	45	S	5382
1578	F	1906	37	M	
1622	M	1874	69	M	
1635	F	1915	28	M	5247
1636	F	1910	33	M	5272
1637	F	1899	44	M	5478
1644	F	1887	56	M	5318
No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital	Diary

				status	
<u>1651</u>	F	1909	34	M	
<u>1654</u>	F	1895	48	S	5384
<u>1669</u>	F	1902	41	M	5447
<u>1673</u>	F	1913	30	M	5460
<u>1682</u>	M	1920	23	S	5177
<u>1684</u>	M	1924	19	S	
<u>1686</u>	M	1873	70	M	5214
<u>1688</u>	M	1911	32	M	5233
<u>1980</u>	F	1889	54	S	5399
<u>2043</u>	F	1922	21	R	5352
<u>2046</u>	F	1916	27	M	
<u>2058</u>	M	1867	76	M	5002
<u>2090</u>	M	1913	30	M	5237
<u>2165</u>	M	1923	20	R	5118
<u>2173</u>	M	1891	52	M	
<u>2207</u>	F	1914	29	M	
<u>2254</u>	F	1901	42	M	5420
<u>2274</u>	F	1896	47	S	
<u>2331</u>	M	1908	35	M	
<u>2343</u>	M	1913	30	S	
<u>2363</u>	M	1919	24	M	5071
<u>2364</u>	M	1916	27	S	5074
<u>2382</u>	M	1903	40	M	5173
<u>2399</u>	M	1901	42	M	
<u>2427</u>	M	1918	25	R	
<u>2457</u>	F	1899	44	S	5238
<u>2463</u>	F	1890	53	S	
<u>2466</u>	F	1887	56	R	5283
<u>2475</u>	F	1885	58	S	5479
<u>2486</u>	F	1913	30	S	5373
<u>2490</u>	F	1900	43	M	5314
<u>2512</u>	M	1907	36	M	
<u>2542</u>	M	1895	48	M	
<u>2543</u>	M	1917	26	M	5085
<u>2544</u>	M	1922	21	S	
<u>2564</u>	M	1874	69	S	5157
<u>2567</u>	M	1893	50	M	5158
<u>2575</u>	M	1915	28	R	
<u>2578</u>	M	1918	25	S	
<u>2631</u>	M	1921	22	R	
<u>2645</u>					
<u>2656</u>					5108
<u>2670</u>	M	1920	23	S	
<u>2673</u>	F	1913	30	M	
<u>2675</u>	F	1892	51	R	5338
<u>2677</u>	F	1870	73	M	5339
<u>2678</u>	F	1899	44	M	
<u>2684</u>	M	1908	35	M	5004
No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital status	Diary

<u>2686</u>	M	1892	51	M	
<u>2695</u>	M	1922	21	S	
<u>2703</u>	M	1885	58	S	5030
<u>2708</u>	M	1895	48	M	
<u>2719</u>	M	1876	67	S	
<u>2720</u>	M	1890	53	M	5045
<u>2734</u>	M	1893	50	M	5065
<u>2739</u>	M	1914	29	M	
<u>2741</u>	M	1915	28	S	
<u>2744</u>	M	1904	39	M	5075
<u>2751</u>	M	1902	41	M	
<u>2771</u>	M	1899	44	M	
<u>2776</u>	M	1897	46	M	
<u>2791</u>	M	1884	59	M	
<u>2799</u>	M	1916	27	S	
<u>2814</u>	M	1912	31	S	5181
<u>2822</u>	M				
<u>2828</u>	M	1901	42	M	
<u>2829</u>	M	1925	18		
<u>2842</u>	M	1909	34	M	
<u>2844</u>	M	1909	34	S	
<u>2845</u>	M	1921	22	R	5226
<u>2852</u>	M	1899	44	M	
<u>2858</u>	F	1910	33	M	
<u>2873</u>	F	1910	33	M	5301
<u>2874</u>	F	1900	43	M	5311
<u>2881</u>	F			M	
<u>2885</u>	F	1881	62	M	5327
<u>2886</u>	F	1906	37	S	5331
<u>2899</u>	F	1915	28	R	5410
<u>2903</u>	F	1896	47	M	5423
<u>2905</u>	F	1912	31	S	
<u>2906</u>	F	1922	21	S	5432
<u>2907</u>	F	1916	27	S	
<u>2907</u>	F	1894	49	S	5434
<u>2913</u>	F	1897	46	M	5452
<u>2916</u>	F	1891	52	M	5459
<u>2918</u>	F	1892	51	S	
<u>2925</u>	M	1914	29	M	
<u>2930</u>	M	1903	40	S	5128
<u>2946</u>	M	1905	38	M	
<u>2947</u>	M	1912	31	S	
<u>2952</u>	M	1914	29	M	5097
<u>2957</u>	M	1920	23	S	5139
<u>2962</u>	M	1922	21	S	
<u>2971</u>	M	1924	19	S	
<u>2972</u>	F	1902	41	M	5254
<u>2973</u>	F	1896	47	M	5253
<u>2975</u>	F	1909	34	S	5256
<u>2977</u>	F	1906	37	M	
<u>2979</u>	M	1921	22	M	5051
No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital status	Diary

<u>2992</u>	F	1913	30	S	5310
<u>2994</u>	F	1887	56	S	
<u>2996</u>	F			R	
<u>3002</u>	F	1913	30	M	
<u>3009</u>	M	1901	42	M	
<u>3026</u>	F	1891	52	S	
<u>3034</u>	F	1899	44	M	5480
<u>3035</u>	F	1893	50	M	
<u>3082</u>	M				
<u>3098</u>	F	1919	24	M	
<u>3113</u>	F	1885	58	S	
<u>3116</u>	F	1900	43	M	
<u>3119</u>	F	1924	19	S	5403
<u>3120</u>	F	1869	74	S	5408
<u>3121</u>	F	1883	60	S	
<u>3162</u>	M	1921	22	S	
<u>3185</u>	M	1904	39		
<u>3187</u>	M	1900	43	S	5110
<u>3189</u>	M	1895	48	M	
<u>3194</u>	M	1916	27	S	
<u>3196</u>	M	1873	70		
<u>3224</u>	M				
<u>3225</u>	M	1911	32	M	5169
<u>3226</u>	M	1907	36	M	
<u>3233</u>	M				5302
<u>3247</u>	F	1904	39	S	5385
<u>3250</u>	F	1902	41	S	5446
<u>3253</u>	F	1895	48		
<u>3257</u>	M	1913	30	M	
<u>3269</u>	M	1923	20	S	
<u>3297</u>	F	1926	17	R	
<u>3301</u>	M				
<u>3302</u>	M	1888	55	M	
<u>3306</u>	F	1909	34	M	
<u>3308</u>	F	1909	34	M	5287
<u>3314</u>	F	1922	21	M	
<u>3319</u>	F			M	5481
<u>3322</u>	F	1917	26	M	
<u>3330</u>	M	1880	63	M	
<u>3332</u>	M	1879	64	R	
<u>3335</u>	M	1916	27	S	5109
<u>3345</u>	M	1913	30	M	
<u>3346</u>	M	1919	24	S	
<u>3348</u>	M	1883	60	S	
<u>3351</u>	M	1919	24	M	5068
<u>3353</u>	M	1915	28	S	
<u>3356</u>	M	1920	23	S	
<u>3361</u>	M	1920	23	S	
<u>3364</u>	F			M	
<u>3369</u>	F	1921	22	M	
<u>3370</u>	F	1904	39	S	

No.	Sex	YOB	Age	marital status	Diary
<u>3371</u>	F	1894	49	M	
<u>3375</u>	F	1907	36	R	
<u>3378</u>	F	1875	68	M	
<u>3379</u>	F			S	5417
<u>3381</u>	F	1914	29	M	
<u>3382</u>	F	1873	70	S	
<u>3383</u>	F	1892	51	M	
<u>3384</u>	F				
<u>3385</u>	F	1907	36	M	
<u>3386</u>	F		1943		
<u>3388</u>	F	1891	52	M	5268
<u>3389</u>	F	1898	45	M	
<u>3390</u>	F				
<u>3392</u>	F	1877	66	M	
<u>3394</u>	F				
<u>3395</u>	F				
<u>3396</u>	F	1889	54	M	
<u>3397</u>	F	1881	62	W	
<u>3399</u>	F	1913	30	S	
<u>3400</u>	F			S	
<u>3403</u>	F			M	
<u>3404</u>	F	1898	45	S	
<u>3405</u>	F	1882	61	M	5337
<u>3406</u>	F				
<u>3407</u>	F	1901	42	M	
<u>3408</u>	F				
<u>3409</u>	F			M	
<u>3410</u>	F	1909	34	M	
<u>3411</u>	F	1892	51	M	
<u>3412</u>	F	1912	31		
<u>3413</u>	F	1884	59	M	
<u>3416</u>	F	1923	20		
<u>3418</u>	F	1894	49	S	
<u>3419</u>	F	1913	30	M	
<u>3423</u>	F	1913	30	M	
<u>3426</u>	F	1899	44	W	
<u>3428</u>	F				
<u>3430</u>	F	1883	60	M	
<u>3431</u>	F	1911	32	S	
<u>3433</u>	F	1902	41	M	
<u>3434</u>	M	1920	23	S	
<u>3438</u>	M				
<u>3439</u>	M	1925	18		
<u>3440</u>	M	1908	35		
<u>3442</u>	M				
<u>3447</u>	M				
<u>3453</u>	M				
<u>3454</u>	M				
<u>3455</u>	M				
<u>3456</u>	M			M	
<u>3457</u>	F			M	

Appendix 6: Pre-war and 1943 meals examples given in the April 1943 Directive Replies

Respondent	Foods before the war	Foods in 1943
1313, F, 52, teacher	Breakfast: tea, toast. Evening meal: soup, meat, pudding	Breakfast: ham, kippers, eggs, fish. Lunch: thick soup or minced vegetable, bread, cheese. High tea: sandwiches, cooked meat
1651, F, 34 change in diet: considerably	fruits, green vegetables, salad	Bread, potatoes
1684, M, 19 change due to rationing		Main diet: bread, potatoes, cheese
2486, F, 30, teacher		Cheese and salads, potatoes and fish or meat and a vegetable
2814, M, 31, secretary		Carrots, porridge, stew
2886, F, 37, shop assistant		Mainly the same than pre-war
2918, F, 51		Breakfast: porridge, toast, marmalade (if any) Lunch at school canteen: meat, sweet Lunch at home: cheese dishes, eggs dishes, meat Tea: bread, jam, plain cake, egg if any Supper: toast, cheese or prune
2994, F, 56 Eat less		three meals with only a small portion of meat
3383, F, 51	supper: bacon or fish or other cooked supper	Weekday lunch: out Supper: bread + butter (without jam) or margarine (with jam), salad + potatoes or soup or fried fish or salad fish or boiled eggs or scrambled or omelette. Sunday cooked breakfast: bacon + eggs + bottled tomatoes + toast. Lunch: coffee + cake Tea: Cold meat + mashed potatoes + salad. Supper: whatever is left + cake + cocoa (children: cereal + milk).

Appendix 7: Example of cross-analysis of April 1943 Replies (eating less and social class)

Food/ Class	Non Indicated (45)	Upper Middle (2)	Middle- Middle (18)	Lower- Middle (44)	Working Class (4)
fruits	24	1	11	20	1
meat	16	0	8	17	1
butter	13	0	2	13	0
sugar	12	0	2	7	1
eggs	6	0	4	11	1
milk	6	0	4	7	0
fish	5	1	1	4	0

Appendix 8: Food situation as inconvenience of war according to year

(Source: FR 2068, March 1968, p.1)

Place of importance	1939-40	1940-41	1941-42	1942-43	1943-44
Blackout	1	1	1	2	1
Transport	2	3	3	1	2
Prices	3	4	8	10	8
Fuel, petrol	4	-	9	6	8
Food	5	2	2	3	4
Evacuation	6	15	11	19	21
Lack of news	7	11	14	22	-
Lack of amusements	8	7	6	9	14
Lack of public services	9	9	15	16	-
Political	10	16	16	-	-
Job	11	10	9	6	8
ARP (and home guard)	12	-	-	16	18
Losing Times	13	15	11	13	19
Air Raids	-	5	13	19	16
Supply, shortage	-	6	4	4	3
Separation from friends	-	8	5	5	6
Shopping (queues, crowds etc...)	-	-	7	6	7
Clothes rationing	-	-	-	10	5
Paper shortage	-	-	-	12	12
Labour shortage	-	-	-	13	15
Housing shortage	-	-	-	15	8

Appendix 12a: Sample of Directive Replies

DR 1056 April 1943

- for cases where speed is urgent.
 Overseas airways I should like to see internationalised
- b. I should like the experience of flying once - I think that would be enough, as I should hate the noise & should certainly suffer from airsickness.
 My time isn't really so precious that I couldn't spare a few days for slower & more interesting methods of travel.
- c. As a socialist, I approve.
4. No. I find myself unable to make plans for after the war for myself
5. Diet much ^{local} more monotonous. I dislike meals in restaurants now, whereas I used to like them occasionally.
 No changes in taste; speed of eating etc.
 Fish & chicken, formerly the chief items in my restricted diet have disappeared & I have to rely almost entirely on eggs for protein.
6. Have no home of my own.

DR 1094 April 1943

C. A. SHIRAS.

4. Anywhere, at the sea, when possible, abroad — esp., France, Norway, Russia.

5. No significant change, except as compelled by rationing — with 2 modifications
 - Certainly eat faster (less time)
 - Tend (like many other people) to eat & enjoy things we never thought of eating in peace-time — esp., offal, certain kind of stuff.

6. No interest in details of this kind.

DR 2886 April 1943

a look round before the ~~building~~^{re building} is begun,
 5) The war has caused us to forgoe butter
 and fruit, of which we formerly took large
 quantities, (apples, oranges & bananas). Otherwise
 our diet is not much changed. We are fairly
 plain eaters and take little meat. My sister
 still makes cakes & pastry; we have always
 surplus sugar for only one of us takes
 sugared tea, and plenty of margarine, which
 we do not like on bread and use very
 sparingly. We have no changes in manner
 or place of eating. Our food is substantially
 the same. We eat ^{much} salad when in season
 and when out of it if not too dear.
 We always seem to have variety and abundance
 at table.

After the war I shall abandon meat
 altogether & live on fruit, vegetables, eggs &
 milk.

6. Living room. We have in the living room
 4 easy chairs. One was my grandmother's
 rocking chair and now has the rockers removed;
 one, a "fireside" chair was got with cigarette or
 sweet coupons, it has very sticking-out arms
 on which I bruise myself daily; a creaking
 basket chair, and a wicker bedroom chair.
 The reason for this odd assortment is that
 our room is so small we had to put
 in it furniture that would best be

DR 3388 April 1943

Priority B4. Holidays

I want a holiday abroad as soon as practicable after the war. Have travelled in 10 European countries. Should like to see Greece, also Holland (last visited 1912) and other countries that have stood up to the Axis. Should greatly like to see Russia again (last visited 1932 ~~in~~ towards end of 1st 5-Years Plan), but funds not likely to permit. Same applies to U.S.A. Desire for holiday abroad not due to any disinclination to see more of my own country, (which I love since the war more than I ever did before) but simply to a) desire for complete change which is the only real "recreation", and b) desire to get into personal touch with the people of the countries at whose side we have been fighting.

5. Eating habits

Living in the country I have no choice of places to eat except when I go to the nearest town, Reading, and then if possible I get a restaurant meal a) because it saves on rations, b) because its always pleasant to eat what one hasnt cooked or thought about beforehand. I dont think my tastes have radically changed. True, I eat everything sweet that is going (such as "shop" jam in restaurants, which I used to dislike because it was sickly-sweet) and all my sweet ration, taken always in chocolate) but I think I shall revert to pre-war habits (e.g. little jam, and sweets and chocolate only occasionally) directly there is available the pre-war sugar supply. I eat more tinned food (if I can get it - usually my points wont run to it, they go on golden syrup, to save sugar for jam-making, and biscuits, porridge oats, and so on) but solely to eke out rations. Before the war, I never ate anything out of a tin, except sardines and occasionally tongue. I always made soup out of vegetables or bones myself. But war wastes such a terrible lot of time - no petrol, country bus service frightful and always crowded with military, nothing delivered, etc, etc - that tinned food is a godsend - points permitting. I bottle an immense amount of fruit and make all the jam I can out of my sugar ration. This is merely an extension of what I have always done, accentuated by war-time necessity. I grow all the fruit and vegetables I can. I dont find the shortage of meat a trial, provided I can get some meat, however small a helping, with lots of vegetables. Am sure we all ate too much meat and too few vegetables, before the war. The trial is that one has to do such a lot of thinking and preparing war-time meals. This wouldnt matter if one had any help, either in the house or in the garden. It is my considered opinion, having lived in the country in this war and in London in the last, that country women work very much harder than townswomen.

Appendix 12b: Samples of diaries

Celia (5423) September 1941

F21

English to plan ⁶adequately ahead. The Army Command, which had neither learned nor endeavoured to learn anything since 1815, might have been ready for the B. of Waterloo, but was certainly ~~ready~~ not for a winter campaign in the trenches of Russia. The British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Raplan, an old Peninsula veteran, invariably referred to the enemy as "the French"!!

The news from Leningrad is very grave to-night - according to the Germans. There are probably are Germans east of Leningrad - if the Russians can't exterminate them the city will soon be encircled.

What a marvellous discovery Lord Woolton has made! We are the only nation eating more bread now than before the war. Of course we are. There's not much else to eat - no eggs, no tomatoes, no fruit, little cheese, less jam.

9.9.41

lively doings in the Arctic Circle - what with forestalling the Germans in Spitzbergen, & Vian on the warpath again. Wish I had the same confidence in the Army as I have in the Navy.

Judging from the Postscript to night, the Russians have the right idea about seeing that everybody - man & woman - does his or her duty firewatching etc. A spot of their discipline wouldn't come amiss in this country.

It's time Winston Churchill told the people of this country that they are living in a fool's paradise at present. Today a woman thought she was comforting me by saying that my son of 18 wouldn't be "called up" because the war would be over before it was his turn. And she really believes it!! How they think we are going to stop the war, I don't know. Leave it to the

Lillian (D 5239) October 1941

Housewife age 26.
W.V.S.17 OCT 1941
ASP. 2. 9War Diary

- Oct 1st Mrs G. spent the morning bottling tomatoes, but there were air bubbles round them and she was afraid that they would not keep. They went blackberrying in the afternoon and got pounds of beauties. They said that they were hanging like grapes and the local people do not gather from the hedges - they tend to go to recognised blackberrying grounds. Mrs G. had to give most of hers away, because she had no sugar.
- 2nd It was only yesterday that I read in the ~~P~~ Manchester Guardian that no increase in the meat or fat ration was contemplated in the near future, and today an increase in the fat and sugar ration is announced over the wireless. It's the fat that pleases me most. I tried to get a starling's snipe for making hip-jelly, but they are not obtainable. Jack came home today bringing me a present of a piece of Cheshire cheese, and one small onion.
- 3rd Mrs K. asked me if I had any onions. I told her I had just one, and she said would I mind accepting some from her garden, and would I ask for more when they were finished. I went nothing, but found very few left on the trees. Mrs G. tells me that there is a snag in the increased fat ration. Three ounces have to be taken in cooking fat, so she reckons

Norma (D7358) October 1941

15 OCT 1941
M.T.S. I
518~~21st~~ Amy, Oct 4.

30th Saw the District Nurse off, did various chores. Got Matty to help in kitchen and (very reluctantly) to get kindling wood. We picked some of the apples, but there are nothing like so many as last year. Put the pears into hay in the cellar to ripen. Dos Passos came out with me, we went up to the saw-mill; I was bothered as my permit only allowed for stobs in fir or spruce, which need creosoting to last and that would have been an awful job, even if we could have got the creosote. Duncan wasn't there, however. Dos Passos came back and helped to pick apples, which he enjoyed very much, as much as I would have enjoyed picking apples in Central Europe, says in the middle of a war. He obviously finds fiction unsatisfactory, wants to write history. Tom slept in the sun, needs a rest.

The police car came for them, and they went off after lunch. As they left I was stung by a wasp; later my hand swelled. Denny and Ruth were awfully professional! The hay dried quite a bit and we turned it. The Co-op rang up for cabbages for the camp. I did various arrangements with ration books etc. Willie Galbraith came in to consult with Dick about becoming a fish buyer, as he has been advised not to go on with fishing (prostate gland swelling). I gather he does nothing but pay the boats for fish and then get it out of the buyers, which seems to be an easy job and I accused him of being a capitalist middle-man and no use, at which he smiled in his usual charming way, and said he was bored staying in Carradale, there was no life, he must be with the fishermen. Denny would skipper the Cluaran for him.

Later we all played racing demon; Denny of course won, but I was quite efficient for once. Archie and Janet had walked in the hills, and I hoped he would get as far as propeeing, as I told him he should, but he didn't. I think she's amazingly nice and long-suffering with him; he must be an awful nuisance, dithering, and of course she has a good, responsible job and can't be expected just to chuck it for him the moment he makes up his mind.

Everyone was awfully nice. Horrid, their all going at once.

1st A hectic morning with everyone chasing me for brown paper, labels, sandwiches, ration books, jam, addresses, etc. Talked to Janet and Archie; he will be an idiot if he misses it this time. She's very unlike the usual Haldane marriages, not "upper-class" but a comrade, and so intelligent and sane and kind. Half Scots, too. I took them all into Tarbert, in a packed car; felt very gloomy, but hope I may get a little time to write. After they left, tried to post Murdoch's parcel, found it was overweight and had to repack it! Saw the Carradale boats in Tarbert harbour, then Rob Ruadh and Kay rolled up, both with the drink taken and extremely amiable - Kay is never un-shy except when a bit drunk. Rob with the beginnings of a brilliant orange beard. Talked about the district nurse, then Sandy dodged past. I discovered that there was to be no more fishing this week, not a sign of herring anywhere. They may have gone up the Clyde, but the boats don't get a permit to go there, because of the mines. Even so, none were reported; one of the Campbells had had a shot of mackerel, otherwise nothing at all, and everyone rather disappointed. Most of the crews had gone back to Carradale, but Sandy and Donald MacAllister were stuck with the Amy, because the engine hadn't been going satisfactorily - it is only sense to have the engine sorted right before you leave the boat. Rob suggested I should take my courage in both hands and board the Amy - Sandy had just slunk by, not stopping to see me! I thought I would, so I left a message with Pickie, asking him to tell after the Committee meeting on Saturday, then went over to the Amy, boarded her and called down the focsle. Sandy answered Hello Naomi, come away down, with great warmth. I was obviously very welcome, and we

Clara (5318.1) February 1942

INSTALLMENT OF DIARY.

28 MAR 1942

9. 900.4a.

Tuesday 17th Feb.

I got up to get the children off to school, but collapsed as I got out of bed. I was astonished at this as I had not felt too bad when I went to bed last night. I tried desperately to dress myself and the children but found this an impossibility. All the time Percy was telling me to get back to bed and he would get up, but I persisted in my efforts as he still had the flu. At length I gave up the struggle and very reluctantly got into bed. I must confess that once in bed I felt so bad that I had no other thought but thankfulness to relax on something soft. I stayed in bed until the week end and the doctor was then visiting us both. Percy managed marvellously well in the circumstances, and I could not help but wish there was somebody who could relieve him of the work. If we were in Wakefield where our relatives are, there would not have been the question of him having to manage alone like this.

Saturday 21st Feb.

I was feeling much better today, and felt glad that Percy had not suffered as a result of getting up prematurely. For the first time I began to think about some solid food. Betty and Jack came in the evening and came up and sat with me a while. Betty very kindly bathed the children for me. Jack is a draughtsman in a big munition works and he says that the men are very dissatisfied with all the red tape and loss of time in production.

Sunday 22nd.

I got up at dinner time, and felt very strange, but not too bad.
Monday 23rd.

Percy is at home for another week so between us we managed alright. I soon found my feet once I got down again.

Wednesday 25th.

I took David down to the clinic this morning. The doctor examined him and again suggested a course of sunlight treatment. They must be very busy in this department as I am still waiting for notice to take David there. I told the doctor I had enquired at numerous chemist shops for Rose Hip Syrup but could not get any. Every chemist I asked told me it had been on order for ages but they could not get it. One chemist said "the BBC tell you all sorts of things you can get if you ask, but they don't tell us how to get it." The doctor had said on a previous occasion that David was definitely suffering from lack of vitamin C, but that he could not do anything about it. So apparently it is no use my going to the clinic again. The room was absolutely full of mothers and children, and again I thought how pale and thin the kiddies were looking. I was telling a friend of mine about this and she said cynically "Oh, it is only the war babies that are being looked after"

Percy went down to the pictures in town this afternoon, and we spent the evening listening in.

Thursday 26th.

We decided that I should take the opportunity whilst Percy was at home, so after dinner I went down to the pictures in town. There was hardly anyone there at all, and I felt absolutely frozen. I dare not risk getting the flu again so after the big picture I came out and went and had a cup of tea in one of the large Stores and felt much warmer. Although it was hardly four o'clock the place was full, and it is one of the largest cafes in Bradford. I had a teapot of tea, plenty of sugar and milk, a toasted teacake for the modest sum of eightpence. There was a shortage of cakes and the waitress said would I have a waffle instead, but I did not want cakes as I should be having tea when I got home.

Irene (5427) March 1942

Another cold, wretched night at Gatti's. Miss C. tells me that the balloons are now cooking their own meals instead of collecting them ready-cooked from their flight h-q's; I wonder when & why this innovation was made? Of course, the men prefer it enormously, & say there is far less waste of food; there is also far less demand for the wares of the tea-car; they eat & enjoy all their rations instead of throwing half of them away & making up with YMCA buns & pastries. So far, so very good; but, Miss C. pointed out, all this cooking is being done on oil stoves, & isn't there going to be a great shortage of oil?

A lot of flap in the papers about limiting the price of a restaurant meal to 3/6 or so, to cut out "privileged eating" by the rich. But what's the sense in putting all sorts of foodstuffs not in demand by the poor, such as oysters, smoked salmon, game - outside the reach of those who could afford to eat them instead of the

Amelia (D 5240) March 1943

✓ Diary. AUS Teacher. 46.
2. - APR 1943.

Mon. March 15th. In a short discussion of the Beveridge Plan, one of my colleagues (the master returned from R.A.F.) called it "the best plan for encouraging mental deficiency & a B3 nation that could be thought out." He referred to the encouragement of large families in the poorer classes. We hadn't time for me to see if he had any remedy for increased birth rate in the proper place!

Tues. March 16th. The Beveridge Plan cropped up next day, this time in the Pensions section. A woman teacher said that she & her husband would not benefit in any way although they would have to pay the insurance contribution. Her husband looked shocked when I said I thought the Plan was too good to be true, too good to be adopted & implemented completely. I realised then ^{that} I had looked at the Plan entirely from the point of view of a working man with a growing family, worried by a perpetual fear of insecurity which has been a curse for too long.

Thurs. March 18th. We were puzzled by a rather sudden & pronounced increase in the amount of milk brought by the boys at school. For months my daily average had been 7pts.

Robert (D 5201) December 1943

C. W. Smallbones. Age 37. Sub. Str. Attendant. 18 JAN 1944
December 43. **SMAT**

1/ Longingly I hope that this year will see the end of the war in Europe at least. Every other thought about 1944 is clouded by that dominant hope.

2/

(a) I just didn't give a damn what was done about him.

(b) Subsequently the affair seemed to blossom out into much ado about nothing.

(c) Mostly they were indifferent to the whole subject.

3/

(a) Christmas was, as usual a normal working period for me. It happened to be 8-4 Shift so that I had the evening at home.

(b) Dinner? was at 4-30 pm. consisting of, roast beef, roast spuds, and greens; followed by my wife's wartime edition of the Xmas pudding. Very dark one too, by virtue of the enormous amount of boiling my wife gave it.

(c) Cards, rather less than last year. Gifts for the children about equal to last year, but a greater proportion of home-mades. For my wife and I gifts were considerably less than previous year.

(d) My 7 yr. old son went, with the other local school-children to a party, given by local Canadian soldiers. They fed us well, and gave every one a present.

Edna (5390) March 1944

3

3

The lectures have been most enjoyable and I hope after the war to turn my nose to good effect. Frankly writing articles is too much hard work in war time - and of doubtful profit with newspaper space so limited.

Sunday, 12th March, 1944.

B.B.C. Listener Research Bureau called for volunteers to criticise their sermons, and I am working on a thirteen weeks series (2 per Sunday). A R.C. priest spoke this morning. I liked him - Mgr. Smith of Carlisle - very much. It has made Sunday rather a heavy day, for in the afternoons I have done my journalism. It is too late to start another article now, so ~~that~~ I turn to the German Correspondence Course again this afternoon. Mother said, "Have you forgotten much?" This afternoon I got on not too badly, I do the work accurately enough, when bolstered up with grammars and dictionaries but wonder where I should be without them.

Monday, 13th March, 1944.

The Soroptomist Club had a business meeting today. One of the Clubs in California sent us a parcel of good things. We raffled (6d each) them - eight boxes of biscuits, six small cakes of chocolate, a large piece of chocolate, and a box of tea. I got a box of vanilla wafers. Lucky me! The business mtg. was along ordinary lines. Table talk was also ordinary. Before I was a Soroptomist I thought that at such gatherings the conversation scintillated. What a mistake. Food continues to predominate. How to cook things, how to buy things, how to spread the rations, etc. Everything the restaurant puts before us gets discussed too. The only other theme of discussion is what other women are doing.

We have had a crowded day in the office. Capt. Macgowan, as you know, treats me as if I were a German spy and I am only a degree or two wiser than when I started about the war at sea. One of the visiting Capt. today did open up and told me about the convoy on which he had gone to Russia. There again I cannot put things down on paper.

When the Scharnhorst was sunk, I thought to myself, that the convoy in which she was said to have interested herself must surely be one in which we had friends. So I said to Capt. Macgowan, "The Scharnhorst is sunk!"; said it thrice in fact in increasingly loud tones. Eventually I got a laconic, "Is she?" I said, "Was that our convoy", and he said "Yep". That is the full extent of my knowledge, but I did feel pleased to think I had had a hand in the business.

Capt. Macdiarmid at any rate talks. He has been in the States too. (He is British). He says very few British people like the States, though he did. They have such a totally different view of life. I said, "I know that well enough. It seems to me that there is no law or order in the place". He ~~xxxx~~ saw what I meant and said, "The British are a law-abiding nation. We have so many regulations and we abide by them. In America, there is nothing like so many laws. People are compelled to obey the law there and the penalties for infringement was much more severe." When