

# London at War

## What was life like for people in London during the Second World War?

Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939 after the German invasion of Poland. Even before the declaration of war children were evacuated out of the cities to the countryside and air raid shelters were built in preparation for bombing raids.

Follow the trail to find out more about life in London during the Second World War.

### Air raid shelters



Digital Image © London&#39;s Transport Museum

As early as 1938 the British government was issuing instructions on air-raid shelters.

This is a picture of an Air Raid Precaution (A.R.P.) shelter in Acton in September 1939, the month that war was declared with Germany.

Many Londoners sheltered in the deep underground stations like Elephant and Castle. Most people slept on the platforms but sometimes the only place left to shelter was the stairwell.



German aircraft bombed British cities night after night between September 1940 and May 1941. One third of London was destroyed. 32,000 people were killed in the Blitz in Britain and 87,000 were seriously injured.



Digital Image © London&#39;s Transport Museum

## Evacuation



Digital Image © Copyright unknown; Digital Image;

Listen to this [Oral history recording of Margaret Clark](#)

Evacuation first started on 1 September 1939 before war was declared. Many of these children returned to London because there was little fighting. More children were evacuated in June 1940 and then in September 1940 when the Blitz began.

Watch this [audio slideshow](#) about evacuation during the war

## Rationing

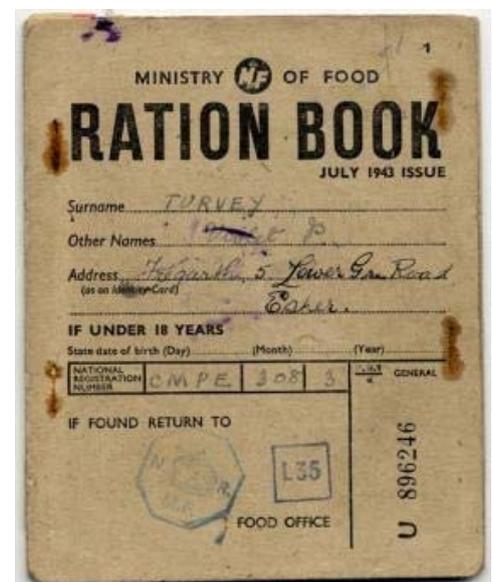
Rationing was introduced in Britain in 1940 because the Germans had cut off many of the supply routes. Britain now faced a shortage of food. Rationing was introduced to make sure everyone got a fair share of food.

Each week and adult was allowed:

113g butter	340g sugar
113g bacon	170g meat
2 eggs	57g tea



Digital Image © Out of Copyright



Digital Image © Out of Copyright

## VE Day Celebrations

Fighting in Europe ended at the start of May 1945. VE Day (Victory in Europe) was officially celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> May. The world war did not end until August 1945.



Digital Image © London&#39;s Transport Museum

This official celebration parade took place in June 1946, almost a year after the war ended.

In May 1945 there were celebrations all over Britain like this children's VE Day party in Hampstead.



### 89 CHILDREN EACH HAD A PIECE OF VICTORY CAKE

Eighty-nine children sat down to tea, cream, jelly, cranberry sauce, and homemade scones, when Cottingham Road, Wintery Road, Wilton Road, Stanning Road, and Knapley Road held their children's V.E. party. And to round off the "merrymaking" they all had a slice of a specially made "Victory and cake," the ingredients being supplied by the children's mothers.

All the children were first served a quarter of a pound of scones, a bag of cranberries, and a tin of jam. For the ladies there was a tin of milk, marmalade and a back of tea, which brought from nothing from a tin of cream to a "bunny rabbit."



The party was organized by Mrs. B. Wilson, who is seen in the top picture sitting the Victory cake. The second picture shows a group of the children busy eating. Picture by M. WATSON.