



Teacher Notes

LENHAM COTTAGES

These 16th century cottages were relocated from Lenham Heath in 1999. They have been rebuilt and preserved at Kent Life as a testament to both traditional building techniques and life on the home front in WWII.



LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT

The WWII house at Kent Life represents a typical home during the war years with a sitting room and a kitchen downstairs with two or three bedrooms upstairs. Just like many houses up and down the country, the bathroom was outside. The windows are covered in a criss-cross pattern, mimicking leaded lights. This went some way to preventing the blast force of bombs shattering the glass during an air raid.

A TYPICAL WWII HOME

Furnishings and fittings were in short supply during the war years and furniture was rationed, so the average wartime house was decorated and furnished in 1930s style. Utility furniture was introduced during the war to protect timber supplies. Standardisation of design and materials meant a minimum standard could be guaranteed. Distemper paint would generally be used to decorate the walls of a house. Virtually no one had fitted carpets, carpets were loose, rugs were laid over bare boards or lino would be used especially in areas of heavy wear. Televisions were rare and transmission stopped during the war and didn't start again until 1946. Almost every 1940s household would have had a wireless set. Kitchens were basically equipped with a cooker, sink and some form of clothes washing machine and a mangle, although these were extremely labour intensive. Wash day would literally take the house wife a whole day to wash dry and iron the families clothes and bedding.

THE 1940's HOUSE

Teacher Notes



The Anderson Shelter

In the garden lies a typical Anderson Shelter. Mainly used in the suburbs because homes in the cities rarely had gardens, the shelters were erected inside a 3ft deep hole and then covered with earth. These steel contraptions were designed to hold 4 to 6 people and afforded some protection against bombs, although they could not withstand a direct hit. When food rationing was introduced in 1940 and the nation urged to "Dig for Victory", some enterprising people even used the roof of their shelters as vegetable patches.



Weekly Rations

4oz (113g)	lard or butter
12oz (340g)	sugar
4oz (113g)	bacon
2	eggs
6oz (170g)	meat
2oz (57g)	tea

WWII GENERAL STORE

Next to the WWII house lies a recreation of a grocers, drapers and cobblers. Most of the fixtures and fittings were taken from a shop in the Kent village of Hawkhurst. Although it contains some similarities to our modern day store (personal service, a good looking shopkeeper and value for money!), it also depicts the harsh realities of food rationing. Many school children visiting Kent Life express surprise and wonderment at how their grandparents and great grandparents survived on such a small amount of food. But once again, those on the home front displayed ingenuity and flare feeding large families with scant resources.