

## WWII On the Home Front – Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Make Do and Mend

- Clothing, or the shortage of clothes, was a cause for complaint. It was very much a case of "make do and mend".
- Since my dad was a tailor, he was able to make lots of clothes for the family from hand me downs
- Seams unpicked and turned inside out, that horrible garment my mother had worn for years and years became a "nice" wee kimono and a jacket for me
- I did feel like a right frump



**Why were clothes in short supply?**

**What does Make Do and Mend mean?**

**How do you feel when you feel 'like a frump'?**

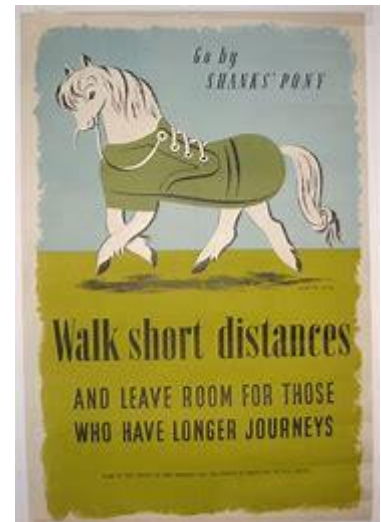
Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front – Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Travel

- We could not **travel** much in these days.
- Fuel was in short supply so the trains didn't run as often
- Buses and cars needed fuel and that was rationed
- It was comforting to be near home when the air raid siren sounded.



Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front - Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Evacuees

- Even though we were 46 miles away, we saw the glow of the fires when Clydebank was bombed
- Soon afterwards the **evacuees**, sad children with little bundles of belongings came off the Glasgow train
- The local headmaster's wife (Mrs Dow) was the organiser who tried to find families who would take the evacuees
- We took in an evacuee called Mary
- Mother tried to make her feel part of the family by letting her share a bed with my sister and me.
- Fortunately for all, the evacuees returned home quite soon and life returned to normal.



### What is an 'evacuee'?

### How would you feel to be an evacuee?

### Why did the evacuees return to their own homes so soon?

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front - Jean McMurdo Remembers

### War is Declared

- I can still hear Chamberlain's voice on the radio announcing that, Britain was at war with Germany on the 3rd September 1939.
- It did not mean much to a 13 year old girl.
- I remember trying to look very serious to match the expressions I saw on the faces of the adults around me.
- It'll be over soon" I thought.
- Then we realised that this was going to last for a long time.
- We saw the changes at school – gas mask drill and young male teachers joined the army leaving only 'old dragons'.



**How did Jean hear the news that war was about to start?**

**Why did the adults have serious faces?**

**What is an 'old dragon'?**

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front - Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Food

- Food was not so plentiful and housewives had to improvise and create dishes out of not very much to feed their families.
- How I hated lentil roast, a regular offering on our table.
- We kids used to drool over the fond memories of our favourite sweets. I used to set aside the peas from the broth on the rim of my soup plate. These were then put in a paper bag and taken to school as pretend sweets.
- As for oranges and bananas - some children knew them only as pictures in a book.



**Food was rationed so that everyone got what they needed.**

**You didn't get everything you wanted.**

**What could families do to get more food?**

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front - Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Prisoners of War (POWs)

- German Prisoners of War (POWs) came.
- It was strange how similar they were to the British soldiers who had come to New Cumnock while they waited to be sent to North Africa to fight the Germans
- Surely they should be wearing Swastikas and jack boots?
- Mother made tea and scones for them, after all, they were all "somebody's son".



**Why did Jean's mother make tea and scones for the (POWs)?**

**What did she think of them?**

**How did the POWs feel?**

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front - – Jean McMurdo Remembers

### Soldiers in New Cumnock

- The young men of the village were being conscripted.
- People who worked in the mines stayed home and carried on with their essential work
- Men who stayed joined the Home Guard and practised what they would do if the Germans came.
- British soldiers came to New Cumnock and stayed for a while.
- They later went to Gourock to sail to North Africa.
- My mother made vast quantities of tea and scones for the soldiers on guard duty.
- One of these soldiers is still a very good friend over 60 years later.



**What did Jean's mum do to help visiting soldiers?**

**Why were they in New Cumnock?**

**How did the soldiers feel about being away from home?**

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>

## WWII On the Home Front – Jean McMurdo Remembers

### TEACHER CARD

#### Jean Looks Back on Life

A lot of water had passed under the Afton bridge between 1939 and 1945. For myself, I had to grow up in difficult times, more clearly seen in hindsight. Everyone thought, in the euphoria of peace, that things would get back to normal very soon, but in 1948 when I got married, there were still shortages. We needed coupons for clothing, docket for furniture, ration books for food. Maybe it was easier in some ways than it is nowadays for a young couple setting out in wedlock. We were less materialistic because **it took more than money to keep a house**, furnish it and hold court in the height of fashion. **Shortage is a great leveller.**

Recollections from Jean McMurdo (nee Gillies)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/80/a1128980.shtml>