

Effects of WAR on Family Life 1939 - 1945

World War 2 affected life from 'cradle to grave' and by the end everyone's life had completely changed in all aspects of living.

Practical problems in raising a family in wartime was difficult enough and standards of maternity care both during and after the war was difficult indeed. The introduction of National Health Service and maternity care was prominent with nationwide services arising and expectant mothers were evacuated to country homes that were converted into maternity units as Towns and Cities hospitals had been severely devastated. Hopefully they didn't need to wear tin hats or listen to bombs exploding nearby. Gas masks were another calamity that had to be carried and worn by everyone to avoid the anticipated mustard gas that was expected to be dropped by German aeroplanes, babies going into 'respirators' (fully enclosing the baby).

After War ended even a year later, mothers queued for shopping having to use their ration books and points remaining to buy food, (whether rationed or not) and prices had soared from prior to outbreak of War.. This was a very long term problem as rationing continued. Then the emotional , social and economic aspects of the father returning made life very emotional for both mother and the children having had undivided attention during the war from their mother,

Many fathers returned to a new abode as the family home had been destroyed by bombs ...many to prefabs, a small tin single storey factory built home as their home had been bombed and non existent. Hopefully more facilities would be installed in these 'Prefabs' than existed in their original home.

Whilst the war was on, children were involved in numerous ways from the start, "DIG for VICTORY" vegetables in the garden, " Make do and Mend" , even as they grew older brought into Defence work and Junior corps of armed services.

Overall a very devastating 5 years of war had severe implications to family life. Keeping the Nation Fed through the War was paramount, good supply of fresh milk and eggs, cod liver oil daily, orange juice and various recipes for a nutritious diet.

Children were generally looking healthy and well fed and clothed, despite the shortages of just about everything. Everyone chipped in with neighbours and friends from around their area without any menfolk to help in an incredible cheerful spirit.

I know as I was one of those children living with a Barrage Balloon outside and 'Anderson' shelter in garden on a Naval Estate in Portsmouth with all the deprivations, existing but we survived