

THE HOME FRONT IN AND AROUND PORTSOY

There were around 90 farms in the Portsoy area in WWI, which supplied the town with some of its food

Britain produced only one third of its food however, so starvation was a real threat with German U-Boats attacking merchant shipping. The expression 'The Home Front' was introduced and the battle was on to grow more food, on farms and on the 1,500,000 allotments created at this time.

Dear Sir,
Milk Prices.
Referring to your letter of 20th inst I now send you copy of advertisement which I have enclosed in the Banffshire Reporter for Saturday, 3rd November 1917. You will no doubt take steps to notify the various milk sellers in Portsoy for their particular information.
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) John Tough.
County of Banff
Food Control.
The maximum retail price of milk at dairies within the Burgh of Portsoy has been fixed at 1/6 per imperial gallon from 5th November 1917 to 31st March 1918.
All milk must be sold by imperial gallon or approved fractional parts thereof.
(Signed) John Tough, Executive Officer.
The clerk intimated that a copy of the advertisement had been sent to each of the milk sellers in Portsoy, and that they had protested against the price fixed and read the following protest sent by them to the Executive Officer at Banff.

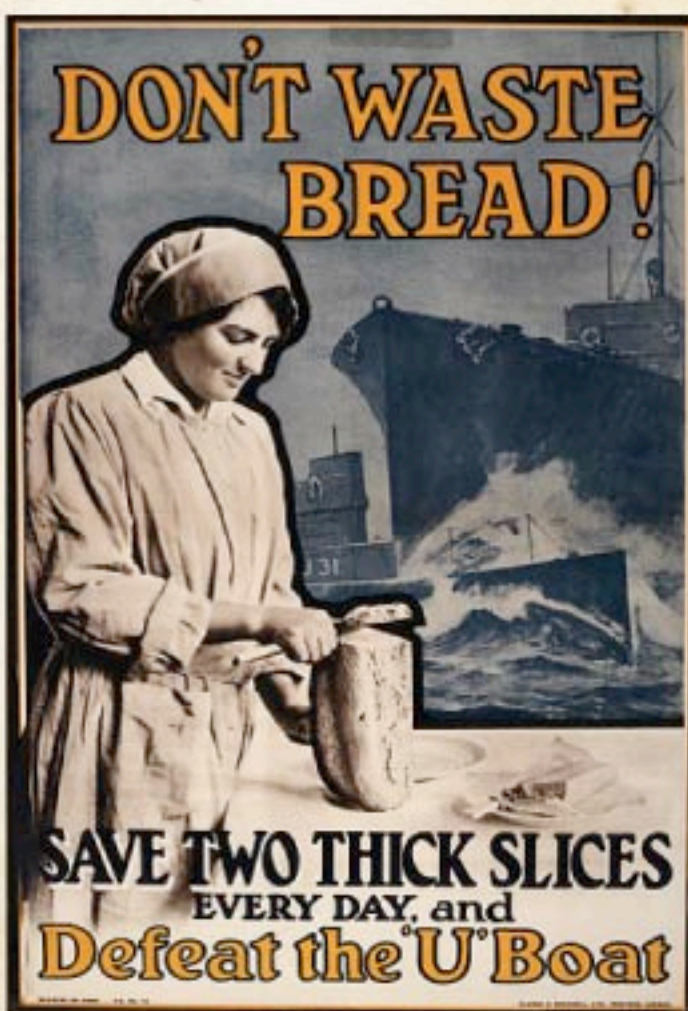
Extract from Portsoy town council minutes regarding milk prices and food control, 15 Nov 1917

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Dairy Farm, Cullen Street

With the price of cattle feed and cows increasing during wartime, dairy farmers in the Portsoy area found it more difficult to produce milk at a profit. The Town Council fixed the price of milk for all dairies in the town; however, this was less than hoped for by the farmers.



From The Banffshire Reporter

Portsoy - holders of the public park allotments have had a busy time of it doing their bit towards helping on the food production scheme. A good stretch of potatoes have been planted, besides, vegetables of various kinds.

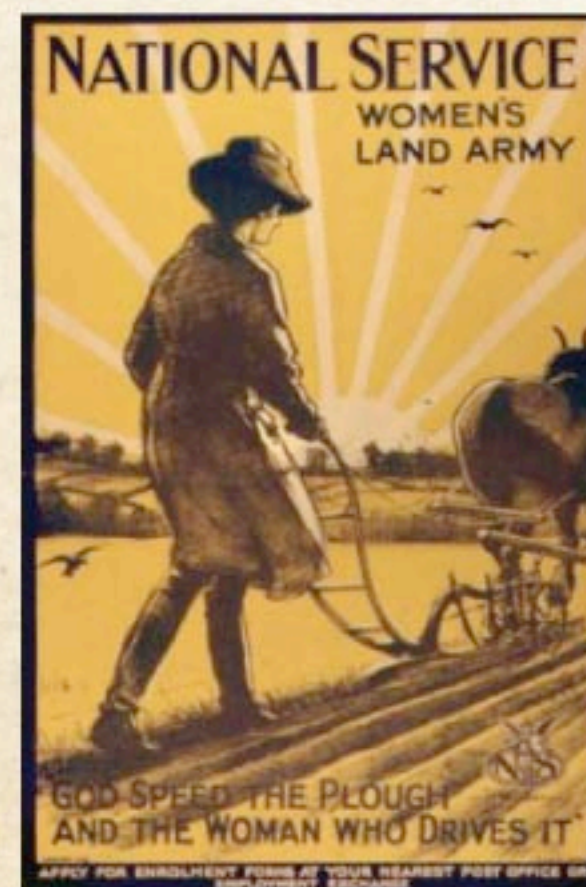
By 1918, shortage of food - especially wheat - was acute, and rationing was introduced for sugar, meat and dairy produce also. 'Whale fish' was increasingly in demand for the dinner table, and Parliament was wondering if flour could be extracted from potatoes. The difficulty of obtaining cotton led to experiments in producing paper clothing from nettles.

Transcript of letter to Portsoy School
December 1916

We thank you, the children of Class V, Portsoy School, and other assistants, so very much for the most kind and generous contributions of scarves, cuffs, mittens, belts, notepaper, soap, cigarettes and matches for the troops.

Lady French

In January 1916 conscription was introduced, compelling men to fight, and two million were called up. Many agricultural workers were exempt from conscription; but there was still a shortage of labour on farms, especially at harvest time, with so many farm men and horses away at the Front. Women, children, the elderly and prisoners of war filled this labour gap on farms.



Excerpt from a soldier's letter to
The Established Church of Portsoy
for the gifts they had made

"After standing for four days amid mud and water,
the socks from Portsoy were very acceptable"



Letters and cards from home helped to keep up morale, it was hoped, at the Front. 'A nice selection of patriotic postcards' and patriotic notepaper was advertised by Calder's of Church Street.

Excerpt from The Banffshire Reporter, advertising a picture show in the Town Hall. This event raised money for the National Relief Fund and also kept the public informed of events at the Front

"SEE The Actual Views on the Battlefield of Liege. The havoc wrought by the Germans in Belgium. The German Prisoners of War at Bruges..."



By July 1915, the war was costing £1 million per day and, as well as growing more food, the Home Front also demanded that civilians help fight other battles: especially by doing voluntary work, and through buying war bonds to fund weapons. The Portsoy branch of the Red Cross Society worked tirelessly at gathering and cleaning sphagnum moss for dressings; and at nursing, sewing, and knitting comforts for soldiers and sailors. Children also helped in this work; for example, Class V of Portsoy School received the letter from Lady French (see above) thanking them for their gifts to the troops.