

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945 RATIONING

## Clothes rationing

From *Wittering's War, Reminiscences of village life during World War II* (East Wittering Local History Group, 2004)

### **CLOTHING RATIONS**

**CLOTHING** - The Prices of Goods Act 1939 had given the Board of Trade the right to control prices, by fixing both a basic price and a maximum price, and local inspectors had the authority to check on and enforce these prices.

However, the Goods and Services Price Control Act came in to being in 1941 and formed the basis for the Utility Apparel (Maximum Prices) Order 1941. This detailed a schedule of fabric specifications, with maximum and minimum weight in ounces per linear yard for specific garments. There were 24 entries for men's underwear, 8 for men's hosiery, and 148 entries for women's and children's underwear and knitwear alone. Outsize garments incorporated just an extra inch or two above the measurements allowed for regular size – not a practice that would be very popular or indeed acceptable today.

The Clothing Coupon scheme had its benefits – consumers knew that the Utility Mark meant good quality clothes at a reasonable price even though adult clothing attracted 100% Purchase Tax at this time. The cause was championed by Vogue magazine and eight top London designers such as Hardy Amies, Hartnell and Worth designed Utility wear for women.

66 Clothing Coupons were allowed for the year to every adult and child.

A man's suit required -----	26 coupons
A woman's woollen dress -----	11 "
2 Handkerchiefs -----	1 "
1 Tie -----	1 "
2 ozs Knitting Wool -----	1 "

*I can remember dresses for children made from their mother's old ones, sewing face flannels and nappies from old towels and, knitting dishcloths with string and all sorts of 'make do and mend.' We unpicked hand knitted woollies, rewound the wool and knitted gloves and scarves from what we had salvaged. - Shirley Salter*

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