

Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945 RATIONING

Petrol rationing

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PETROL was the first commodity to be rationed, although it was supplied for private motoring until March 1942. Then this was banned and the rationing scheme continued for essential purposes, such as doctors and farmers. Rationed petrol was dyed to ensure that it was not used for non-essential purposes, much as "farm diesel" is today. However, it is alleged that running dyed petrol through the filter of a gas mask removed the colour, making it undetectable to suspicious police officers!

Monthly mileage average – private motoring

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Pre-war | 600 miles |
| September 1939 | 150 miles |
| August 1941 | 125 miles |
| May 1942 | 52 miles |
| July 1942 | 0 miles |

When the imposition of petrol rationing began to bite in 1942, the Government began to restrict those who could obtain coupons. It forced local companies to explore alternative modes of transport. Amongst those in the Witterings forced to do this were the two bakeries, Jordan's in Shore Road and Membry's, whose premises were a 'lean-to' on the side of 28 Stocks Lane (now Phillips Windows). Both these bakeries served a wide area delivering their bread from the Witterings to Itchenor, Bracklesham, Earnley and Almodington, and to many outlying farms and houses in Birdham and Sidlesham. Jordan's resorted to the bicycle, with their elderly son, Ron, cycling many, many miles through all weathers, absolutely loaded down with their crusty bread, in order to maintain their service. Membry's, however, had purchased an old, horse drawn van which was driven by Norman, one of the sons.

Meanwhile, the two Wittering pubs, the Royal Oak and the Old House at Home, received their deliveries of the local brew by steam power! The brewers, Henty & Constable of Chichester, put back into commission their Foden steam lorry, which chugged down the Birdham Straight every Wednesday to ensure that our fathers' thirsts were satisfied.

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