

Shopping

A range of items that would have been found in British shops between about 1930—1950.

Links to QCA schemes of work

History Unit 9 — What was it like for children in the Second World War?

History Unit 13 — How has life in Britain changed since 1948?

1] Assorted checks, tokens, price cards and shop sign advertising Co-operative Insurance

The **first** successful retail co-operative group was founded in **1843** but it wasn't until **1872** that it became the **Co-operative Wholesale Society**. It opened **factories** to provide the co-ops with goods and



developed services like **banking and insurance** [the shop sign is advertising Co-operative Insurance] but it never lost sight of the fact that it exists to serve the needs of its ordinary members. In 2001 the Society changed its name to the **Co-operative**

group.

The **tokens** that are included are dividend checks from **Dalton Cooperative Society** that would have been issued to their members, in the same way that members have **plastic digital dividend cards nowadays**. There are also a few **tokens for coal** and British Restaurants. In May



1941 Barrow's first Civic Restaurant, later called **The British Restaurant** opened in the old Public Hall serving **400 meals a day**. Tokens could be purchased in shops and workplaces and these exchanged for **tickets for food**. For example Thursday's lunch: Soup, meat, potatoes, carrots and turnip, semolina or ginger pudding, tea or coffee—10d [less than 5p], the



maximum cost for an average meal. These tokens can be used as play money or as part of a study of pre-decimal money and counting.

2] OXO box and tin

In 1840 a German scientist Justus Lieberg developed a liquid concentrated extract of meat to provide a



substitute for the real thing for those unable to afford it and this became known as **OXO**. No one really knows where it got its name from but one story is that a **docker** chalked **O-X-O** on a crate of the extract whilst it was at a dock to

distinguish it from the others. The OXO cube was launched by leaflets being distributed telling households that they could buy OXO at the local grocery store in tins of 6,12,50 or 100. OXO published **recipe books** and the cubes went to the trenches in the **1st World War** in their thousands. You could send out to your man in the trenches a set of **6 OXO cubes,6 lighters and a collapsible stand** to support his mess tin. The company delivered **100 million OXO cubes** during the **4 years** of the war. There was an **OXO doll**, a **book of Nursery Rhymes**, a **painting book**, a **magic book** and also a red **OXO van Dinky toy**. In **1953 John Hunt** and his team took OXO up **Everest with them**. Since the late **1950s** adverts for OXO have appeared on TV, with families being at the centre of all the commercials.

3] Reckitt's Blue box This laundry starch company began producing laundry blue in **1852** by using a combination of a man made ultramarine and sodium bicarbonate. This made the product more affordable because previously the ultramarine was made by grinding the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli.

The dolly blue was added to the final rinse to ensure that white items would maintain their original brightness. This dye used to be made near **Backbarrow** just off the **A590** near to **Newby Bridge** in a factory which was known as the **Dolly Blue**



works. The rocks along the riverside were covered with a fine, royal blue dust from the works. When the workers were taking a break

they used to sit outside the building at the side of the main road. They were called the **Dolly Blue men** because every bit of **exposed skin** was covered in **blue dye**.

4] **Smiths crisps tin** 'Smiths Crisps' were **first** manufactured in **Australia** in **1931** by Mr Frank Smith and an associate, George Ensor and they were originally made in **20 gas fired cooking pots**, packed by hand and distributed by Nestle confectionery vans.



'Smiths Potato Crisps' sold its early crisps in **3d [1p] packets**, 24 to a tin. '**Twist of salt**' sachets were included before pre-salting was introduced. Growth after World War II was so rapid that the cooking process was improved and in **1961** Smith's introduced its first flavoured crisp—**chicken** and later on **salt and vinegar**. Since then there have been many new variations on Smiths products and their popularity continues to increase.

5] **Cinnamon tablets** Cinnamon comes from the **inner bark** of the shoots of a **tree** that grows mainly in **India, China and Sri Lanka** and it has been found that just **half a teaspoon of cinnamon a day** significantly **reduces blood sugar levels** in diabetics. It is one of the oldest remedies used in traditional Chinese herbalism to help the digestive system. The **Egyptians** used cinnamon in their **embalming rituals**, the **Romans** used it as a **love potion** and valued spices as highly as **gold**, and Nero **burned a year's worth of cinnamon** in tribute to his dead wife. Even **Moses** used cinnamon in a **holy oil** to anoint the ark. By the 11th century **spices** were used in place of **currency** in many instances and during the spice wars that followed control of cinnamon played a vital role. It has also many uses in **baking and cooking** and is arguably the **most popular** spice in the world.



6] **National dried milk tin** Infant formula is an adequate **substitute** for breastfeeding, but it remains a controversial product. Improperly used it can contribute to **obesity** and **tooth decay** in children, among other health problems. Formula milk first reached the United Kingdom in 1904 and became very popular during

the **Second World War**. It remained on sale until **1976**, when it was pushed out by the new modern-style baby milks. In **1941** **dried milk** was also made available to the **general public** and once made up by adding water to the dried milk it would have to be kept **chilled**, usually by standing the filled jug in a bowl of cold water as **few houses had fridges**.



7] **Bicarbonate of soda** is a white powder which when heated gives off **carbon dioxide** and is still used today in baking such things as **gingerbread cake** because it enables the cake to rise. It is also used to treat **indigestion and heartburn** and in **effervescent 'salts'**. Used in toothpaste, baking soda helps to **gently remove stains, whiten teeth and freshen breath**. It is also used in **fire extinguishers**, to clean **fridges and microwaves** and remove **household stains**.



8] **Wicker shopping basket** Wicker is made from the **willow tree** and the twigs are plaited and made into **baskets, chairs, mats, storage baskets** and even containers for **pets**. Willow is used because it is **flexible**. In Victorian times **food, flowers** and many other items would have been carried from **home to market**.



9] **Veritas oil mantle** The mantle was a very important part of the **lamp**. It was a **fragile lacelike tube** fixed round the **gas-jet** which gave off a **light** that glowed with **heat**. Although, obviously things have progressed with the coming of **electricity**, lanterns are still made for **leisure, commercial** and **industrial** uses and are used all over the world because they are highly **dependable, safe** and **long lasting**, although nowadays **paraffin** is used to **fuel the lamp**.

