

HISTORY PROJECT

How did our grandparents and great-grandparents manage their waste materials.

The 'then and now' dustbin comparison tells us a lot about the materials that would enter a home as well as what was put in the bin. Coal was for the fires that heated homes and they produced the ash that made up over 50% of the bin contents. An important point to note was that plastics had not found their way into packaging in the 1940's. Grocers often made their own wrapping from sheets of paper, (origin of our 'sugar paper').

Research can be done by talking to parents/grandparents, or asking elderly local residents to come and speak to the children. The internet is a useful resource, as are books written about life for ordinary people in the 20th century, from 1920's to the 1970's. The photos, song verse and posters are all related to waste and salvage (3R's 1940's style).

An extra poem should you wish to use it!

Recycling

There's a word around we often hear
Its meaning is not brand new
Its been on the go forever
A natural thing to do
My grandma knew all about it
An old coat she would tug
Into her neat little cottage
To tab into a rug

Socks were pulled over a mushroom
Each hole was carefully darned,
Stockings? The ladders were mended
Clothes went down bairn to bairn
Elbows got patches of leather
Collars were turned when they frayed.
Jumpers pulled back for re knitting
Were gloves and scarves when re made

News sheets were screwed up for ignition,
Cinders were sorted in grate
Slack mixed with cement were 'duck eggs'
Housewives were not into waste.
We earned pennies from jars and bottles
By taking them back to the shop,
And peelings went to the farmer
For halfpennies to buy some pop.

Spare veg went into the frying pan
We called it 'bubble & squeak'
And there was 'bread and butter pudding'
From left overs, once a week.
Now somebodys thought a new name up
They've only just realised
What our grandmothers accepted
They now preach to open our eyes.

The elderly don't need this lesson
To them it's a way of life,
Brought up to be very careful,
Taught how to save and to strive.
We've been lectured that waste is sinful,
But to us it's a natural thing.
We don't need fancy new titles
Like this posh word recycling.

Mrs Ivy Wood

Useful website: www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories

Look in Archive list > Childhood and Evacuation