



War effort for soldiers' jam 1918

Feeding the troops was a big responsibility for the Home Front. As these entries from the Diary of Bow Brickhill School show, even schoolchildren were involved: growing potatoes and collecting wild berries:-

March 1914 - Nine Children excluded for verminous heads.

September 1914 - A water supply has been put in the School.

September 1915 - Three children taken to the Work-house today owing to their neglected and verminous condition. Case adjourned pending the arrest of the Mother, who has disappeared.

November 1916 - Outbreak of Scarlet Fever.

November 1917 - Lantern Lecture at the Picture Palace.

1917 onwards - Emphasis on food growing e.g. "Victory Potato Plots" etc.

March 1918 - Twenty poles (approximately 100 m²) of ground cultivated with potatoes - 16 bushels (approximately 390kg) produced. 860 lbs (also approximately 390kg) of blackberries gathered for Army and Navy jam making.

March 1919 - Ten poles of potatoes cultivated, 9 bushels (approximately 220kg) produced.

And as this extract from the Wolverton Express 18th October 1918 shows, the quantities involved could be huge:-

BLACKBERRY COLLECTION
STONY STRATFORD CENTRE
WANTED: TONS OF BLACKBERRIES.

The Ministry of Food states owing to the increased demands of the Army and Navy and the failure of the fruit crop generally, it is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO OBTAIN MORE BLACKBERRIES FOR JAM.

The British Forces consume 1,500,000 pounds per day and to this must be added that required by the American Army and the relatively small quantity allotted for the civilian population. The collection is not confined to schoolchildren, but contributions at the Government Price are received from anybody. Any school in Northamptonshire and Bucks attached to the above Centre will purchase at 3d per pound.

WILL YOU HELP?
OLIVER BALDOCK
Centre Organiser

Source HF7