

Food & Diet – Food Rationing & Petrol Smuggling

Smuggling was a major factor in the countryside and particularly near to the border Aughnacloy and from this part of the world there was a couple of chaps up in the Cappagh area who were very keen and ran these cross border operations the big smuggling items were sugar the reason for that was shop keepers couldn't get sugar through the normal channels British produce sugar but in the south of Ireland the sugar was produced using sugar beat which made all the difference and this came through and it was easily identified because it was granulated sugar usually big coarse grains of sugar it was finer through the normal channels through the British market tobacco was also smuggled quite a bit but sugar was the big big thing and tea to a certain extent but sugar was the big factor.

My father at the Backford had this filling station there was two brothers called Hood there was Billy Hood and his brother Robert they each had a lorry when lorries were terribly terribly scarce they had there own transport business and I remember Billy who died recently who used to tell me about this they used to stop at the Backford and the lorries they had were petrol driven unlike today's diesel he said he used to stop at Backford and get a fill of petrol now that was eight gallons he said it cost about ten shillings one and a penny halfpenny a gallon then he would go on to say wasn't it strange that even in those days at one and a penny halfpenny a gallon nobody could afford to buy petrol now when its forty times that price everyone can afford it.

Generally speaking I think the idea behind the rationing was to guarantee a supply of food and then there was the hidden agenda about the dieticians coming into play about using the correct foods people today would say that during the war time people were healthier because of the diet that was forced upon them at that time generally speaking there was a ready supply of food it was scarce and had to be conserved of course generally speaking there was a good supply the only thing was butter butter was a much more popular food than margarine and margarine was quite plentiful especially in the countryside in the country shop like the Backford and yet the people

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coming in from Belfast, Portadown or Dungannon even they used to say can we have some margarine they thought they couldn't get enough margarine they used it for cooking.

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