

Time past

By 'Holly' Whyte, Okehampton Quaker Meeting

Listening to the radio and again hearing of the needs of government, military and civilians in general, with the need to tighten our belts and balance the books, I found myself remembering our difficult times as a family. Over the years, four daughters and two stepsons with a 40% war disabled husband, who needed hospital care at least once a year, otherwise he was a buyer for Clarks' shoes. The children do not remember those days as lacking in fun or food. Clothes were strictly for school or changed to knock about at home, food was filling if not exotic and we had firewood and featherbeds, if not many sheets. The former were heavy to shake up, but beautifully warm and cosy. Anyway, I wrote a poem about those days and here it is. It just might have tips for the present day.

Time Past

When parcels came with string,
not sticky tape,
we saved the paper and the string
to use again.
To throw away a slice of bread
was mortal sin.
Bake it for crumbs or part of pud
or even – thicken soup.
All bones were stock-pot bound
the base of homemade stews.
Then offal, heads and tails as well,
were welcome food.
Tripe and chittlings, trotters, tongues,
stuffed hearts – a Sunday roast.
No fizzy drinks to dull the appetite,
sweets rationed – after lunch.
No pud for those who left their veg,
a slice of wholemeal bread
before the white,
to train the palate, help the tum
with – apple for a change –
cooked many ways,
we all conformed,
with homemade jam and cake
to sweeten life.