Towards a New Jerusalem

The 70th Anniversary of the National Health Service

By Peter Daniel
Lily Hart and Emily Wade
The establishment of the NHS on July 5th 1948 represented an historic decision whereby the state took responsibility for our health for the first time. Surveys show that the NHS has become the most valued institution in the UK. This resource aims to help young people understand how it was set up and links to KS2 Y6 Local History: (Study over time). It uses the story of one ordinary family, at the start of the 20th century, to show how pressure slowly built to make Britain a fairer more equal society. That pressure was greatly magnified by the effect of two world wars.

The main focus of this pack are the years 1938-1948 and is based around the experiences of the Seaby family who lived in Chelsea. Their story shows the battle one ordinary London family had with what William Beveridge identified as the "Five Giant Evils" in society: squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease. Their story will show how each of these ‘evils’ impacted upon them. In particular, it will focus on a family crisis in 1944 that reveals the angst of having a seriously ill child in pre-NHS Britain. People believed real victory in 1945 meant not returning to the deprivations of the 30s and that the state should protect us from ‘the cradle to the grave.’ Using Private Joe Seaby’s story we’ll look at the years 1938-48 to help pupils understand why the NHS was created and what existed before it.

The NHS was created just two weeks after the arrival of the Empire Windrush in June 1948. Through Udine Canoville’s story we will appreciate the contribution immigrants made to the establishment of the NHS.
Towards a New Jerusalem: Introduction

Soldiers returning to civilian life were determined that the sacrifices they and their comrades had made, both the living and the dead, would lead to Beveridge’s “Five Giants” being conquered.

By the time William Beveridge published his Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services in December 1942 Pte Joe Seaby was already marked by war.

‘The Struggle for democracy’, no. 2 in a series ‘Changing Britain’ c.1949 by Cadbury Brothers!

Royal College of Nursing Archive
Joe’s Story

Joe Seaby’s colourised photograph taken as part of a family set on the birth of Patsy Ann 1938
Both Joe’s parents came from poor backgrounds. His mother Norah’s family had moved to Fulham during the Great Irish Famine having fled Clonakility, County Cork to avoid starvation. She was a strong woman capable of standing up for herself in the tough slum district in which she grew up. Joe’s father Arthur was a costermonger, a barrow boy from Chiswick. Neither of his parents went to school and both were illiterate.
Reading Joe Seaby’s birth certificate.

- Which of the Five Giants does Norah’s entry on Joe’s birth certificate show?
- Look at p 7: ‘The Education of the Coster Lads.’
- What do you think about the education provided for Arthur and Norah’s children?

Walham Avenue was typical of London slum housing of the time - damp, poorly ventilated and overcrowded
The Education of the Coster Lads

Henry Mayhew wrote about the coster’s ‘education’ in the 1840s.

Norah Seaby was illiterate

Richard Seaby pictured during his time at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Fulham. Richard and Arthur Seaby both left school at 12 years old. Joe, who started the school after WW1, left school in 1925, aged 14.
Look at the 1911 census and Fulham Rate Book.

- How many people were living in each room of 3, Walham Avenue?
- Which of Beveridge’s ‘Five Giants’ are these sources evidence of?
What is Walham Yard like today?

13, Walham Yard, Fulham, SW6 was sold as a converted 3 bedroom flat for £1,025,000 on 24 March 2016

Joe packs away his barrow in Walham Yard after his last day on North End Road market in 1994.
My Old Man said Follow the Van 1919

My Old Man is a music hall song written in 1919 by Fred Leigh and Charles Collins, made popular by Marie Lloyd. At the time it was written, most London houses were rented, so moving in a hurry – a moonlight flit – was common when the husband lost his job or there was insufficient money to pay the rent. The Seaby family moved many times.

My old man said "Foller the van",
And don't dilly dally on the way.
Off went the van wiv me 'ome packed in it,
I followed on wiv me old cock linnet.
But I dillied and dallied, dallied and I dillied
Lost me way and don't know where to roam.
Well you can't trust a special like the old time coppers.
When you can't find your way 'ome.
Let’s All Go Down the Strand!

Let’s all go down the Strand
— Have a banana!
Let’s all go down the Strand!
I’ll be the leader,
you can march behind.
Come with me and
see what we can find!
Let’s all go down the Strand
— Have a banana!
Oh! What a happy land.
That’s the place for fun and noise,
All among the girls and boys.
So let’s all go down the Strand!

C.W. Murphy and Harry Castling

The Seaby’s worked as costers in the North End Road Fulham. Every day they headed off for Covent Garden, taking their barrow along the Strand, to stock up on fruit and vegetables, before returning to their pitch to sell it on North End Road street market, Fulham.

Covent Garden Community Association

Covent Garden was once London’s premier fruit and vegetable market. Today it is an entertainment hub.
Costers and Cockney Rhyming Slang

‘The police in particular they hated and would ambush them whenever they could, pelting them with bricks and stones.’ Mayhew, Henry, London Labour and the London Poor 1851

Costermongers spoke in a loud singsong voice to catch their customer’s attention. To confuse those outside their tight knit community they distrusted, like the police, they used cockney rhyming slang. When a coster was in trouble everyone in their community would rally around. Joe’s mother Norah was notorious in Fulham for her confrontations with the police, as this story from the West London Observer of 1924 shows:

West London Observer - Friday 21 March 1924
All me life I wanted to be a Barra-Boy.

Up the apples an' pears,
and across the Rory O' Moor,
I'm off to see my dear old
Trouble and Strife.
On the Cain and Able,
you will always see
A pair of Jack the Rippers
and a cup of Rosy Lee.
What could be better than this –
A nice old cuddle and kiss –
All beneath the pale moonlight.
Then some Tommy Tucker and off to Uncle Ned.
Oh What a luverly night tonight.
All my life I wanted to be a barra boy,
A barra boy I always wanted to be,
When I wheels me barra,
it fills me up with pride,
I'm a coster, a coster, from over the other side,
I'll turn my back on all the high society,
Take me where the ripe bananas grow,
Well, I sell 'em a dozen a shillin',
That's how I makes my livin',
I should have been a barra boy years ago
Get off me barrer!
I should have been a barra boy years ago!

Sung by Pearly King, George Hitchens and Flanagan and Allen

Westminster Music Library
To escape poverty Joe’s oldest brother Arthur joined the army (Royal Fusiliers) in 1910. He was killed at Messines on 31.10.1914 during the first few months of the First World War.

Look at Private Arthur Seaby’s Army medical.

- Why do you think he grew and put on so much weight after joining the army?
- Which of Beveridge’s ‘Five Giants’ is this medical evidence of?
JOE’S OLDEST BROTHER ARTHUR SEABY

With nearly one million British and Commonwealth war dead in WW1, ordinary soldiers like Arthur who were killed were easily overlooked. Notice his name is mis-spelt Sealy on his memorial scroll.

The scroll from King George V received by the Seaby family when Joe’s brother Arthur was killed in 1914. Joe’s mum Norah was so devastated she made Joe promise to her he would never go to war.
Arthur’s brother Richard did not volunteer to fight, but was conscripted on reaching his eighteenth birthday. Before being sent to France he decided to get married to his girlfriend Bertha – who was already pregnant. He was killed at the Battle of Cambrai on December 3rd 1917.
Georgie is wearing the glengarry cap of the Highland Light Infantry this means this picture must have been taken at the end of the war when he left the King’s Royal Rifles after recovering from a serious wound.

Under Army Order 204 of 6 July 1916 the army issued WOUND STRIPES to mark each occasion on which a soldier had been wounded.

Georgie’s final serious wound was during the Battle of the Somme.

Under Army Order 4 of 1918 SERVICE ABROAD CHEVRONS were added for each complete year served abroad since 4th August 1914.

- How many chevrons has Georgie got?
- Look at his medal card. Georgie’s final wound at the Somme was bad enough to bring him home. Can you work out what year would that be?
Georgie Seaby received a head wound probably during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. It was a ‘Blighty,’ a wound that sent him home. He needed a metal plate inserted into his skull to allow the wound to heal. Receiving the wound saved his life, as after leaving hospital, he was transferred to the Highland Light Infantry and never returned to France. When he left the army, he returned to life as a coster selling flowers. Georgie never recovered from his wound and had periods where he was unable to work, as he could not afford to have the specialist treatment that he needed.

Read Private Georgie Seaby’s story of how he was wounded in the First World War.

- Which of Beveridge’s ‘Five Giants’ is Georgie’s story evidence for?
A Coster Brotherhood: Pearly Kings

Before the NHS, hospital treatment was reserved for those that could pay for it. Costermongers had a custom of organising a whip-round to help those who had fallen on hard times. This ‘brotherhood’ can be seen in the Pearly Kings and Queen’s, who decorated their clothes in pearls to raise money for charity, i.e. hospitals. In 1916, the year Georgie Seaby was wounded, they were raising money for hospitals for disabled soldiers.

Henry Croft (1861 - 1930)

The Pearly Kings and Queens, who did so much for charity, have a history which stems from the story of a young boy named Henry Croft, who sewed pearly buttons onto his hat and coat in order to become more visible in the marketplace, where he was selling wares to help the poor.

From just thirteen he swept the streets round London’s market stalls

Those costermongers took to him, admiring his calls.

He wanted not to gain himself, but sought to help those others

Who when in need he’d give his love like they were all his brothers.

Anita Williams

Donkey Marathon.

The Queen Witnesses a Costers’ Race at Richmond Horse Show.

Entries from the Front.

Cancelled last year on account of the war, the Richmond Royal Horse Show was held yesterday in aid of Queen Mary’s Star and Garter Home for paralysed and disabled sailors and soldiers.

The Queen and Queen Alexandra spent nearly three hours at the show, and King Manuel and his Consort were also present.

Many features, of course, had to be dropped, notably the coaching Marathon, but this was replaced by a “costers” donkey Marathon.

This provided a good deal of amusement. Driven by pearly kings, escorted by their queens — wonderfully robed and crowned with magnificent feathers — whole families were crowded in some of the donkey carts.

Entries for the ordinary events were naturally fewer, but many had an interest quite their own, having come from officers in the trenches, written in pencil.

Mr. Walter Winans took two prizes. During the afternoon the Queen visited a number of wounded soldiers who were being entertained at tea in a special marquee. The sale of nine horses, one donkey and two rabbits for the benefit of the fund realised £337 6s.
Dib’s Story

Florence ‘Dibs’ Seaby’s colourised photograph taken as part of a family set on the birth of Patsy Ann 1938
Dib’s Nan Annie Tomkins

Florence Brill, Dibs Seaby’s mum, lost her mother Annie when she was only 11 years old, when she died from exhaustion in childbirth. With no NHS many poor women died due to a lack of care.

Before the NHS was formed in 1948 there was no free medical for women during pregnancy. Most births were at home and, amongst working class women, deliveries were often assisted by a neighbour, or relative acting as midwife. Consequently, mortality was high. Dib’s Nan, Annie Tomkins, died of exhaustion trying to give birth at the age of 39.

- Look at the pregnant lady (right) from this picture from 1909. What was the dilemma many working class mothers faced at this time?
- Look at the graph. When did maternal deaths start to fall in the UK?
- What factors caused the maternal death rate to fall at this time?
Florence Brill, Dibs Seaby’s mum, became a single parent at 17, after losing her husband Pte. James Brill in the First World War. She sought financial assistance from the British Legion, but was turned down and left to struggle on alone.

Compare the two photographs above.

- What do you notice about Florence’s appearance between the two pictures?
### Florence Ann (‘Dibs’) Brill Birth Certificate

**CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH**

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<th>Chelsea</th>
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<td>Name, surname and maiden name of mother</td>
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**General Register Office**

Applicant Number: 66482

*Certified to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.*

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 7th day of January 2008

**BXCC 930848**

**WARNING:** A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

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**The address given for Dibs birth on 13th March 1917 was 250 King’s Road.**

- What do you think the building at 250 King’s Rd was? (Can you guess who the Chelsea Guardians were?)
The address given for children born in the Chelsea Workhouse was 250 King's Road. This gives some idea of the terrible situation that Florence Brill found herself in after her husband was killed at Gallipoli in 1915. When she found herself pregnant with Dibs in 1917, there was no support for her as there was no NHS. Single mothers found it almost impossible to find work.
Poverty fuels tuberculosis: Dibs with T.B.

In 1928 Dibs was eleven years old and nearly died from tuberculosis (TB). TB is a disease of poverty. It is widely recognised, even today, that poor communities have more cases of TB. This is because: 1) A lack of basic health services; 2) poor nutrition; 3) poor living conditions.

In 1928 thousands of children in London were struck down with this deadly disease. There was no NHS to diagnose or treat them, which meant a long delay between disease and cure, which only increased the spread of TB to more children. Dibs was lucky. She was treated at the charitable Victoria Hospital for Children before being sent to their convalescent home in Broadstairs, Kent.
Dibs at the Convalescent Home

In 1928, Dibs was sent to the Metropolitan Convalescent Home in Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs. It was opened as an outpost of the Victoria Children’s hospital in 1895, as it was thought children needed to get away from London’s polluted air to get over TB.

What were children’s convalescent homes?
The idea was that poorly children would benefit from sea or country air. For this reason, convalescent homes were generally by the sea or in the countryside, or both. Dibs was sent there because she had tuberculosis (TB). A stay in a convalescent home could be anything from a few weeks to several years.

Met Broadstairs
5 Nov 1928
Dear Mummy,

I am coming home on Tuesday so please send me some money straight away. Please be on the station to meet me....

I must close now
Dibs xxxxxxxxxxxx

Think about Dibs experience with TB.
• Which of Beveridge’s ‘Five Giants’ is Dib’s battle with TB evidence for?
Outbreak of World War 2

Private Joe Seaby Royal Fusiliers Cairo 1944

Peter Daniel
During the duration of Joe Seaby’s service, he spent time in Egypt, North Africa, and Italy. He had a few instances of leave, both medical and home leave. While some of his letters express interest in the places he was, he mostly concerned himself with home. During his one visit home once abroad, he was able to see his wife and child. Shortly after his trip, he received word in November that he was to become a new father.

Joe Seaby’s Timeline 1938-48

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<td>1 year 255 days</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>12/12/40</td>
<td>23/8/42</td>
<td>107 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGYPT (With MEF)</td>
<td>23/8/42</td>
<td>24/8/42</td>
<td>1 year 255 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNAF</td>
<td>24/8/42</td>
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<td>27/3/44</td>
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<td>1 year 353 days</td>
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<td>10/7/44</td>
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Joe Seaby Timeline 1938-48
Birth of Patsy Ann Seaby: 2 April 1938

Joe and Dibs married at Fulham Town Hall on 13th September, 1937. It was a simple registry office wedding with no thrills and was organised very quickly.

- Look at the date of the wedding and then at Pat Seaby’s birth certificate on p30. What do you notice?
- Why would this have been seen as controversial in 1937?

Money was tight with a baby on the way, so there was nothing to spare for a honeymoon, when an expensive new pram was urgently needed. In any case, the most exotic trips Joe and Dibs ever went on were a beano down to Brighton, or hop picking in Kent with the other coster families from North End Road. These were good times, but all this was to change when war arrived.
### Birth of Patsy Ann Seaby: 2 April 1938

**Certified Copy of an Entry of Birth**

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<th>REGISTRATION DISTRICT</th>
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- **Name of child:** Patricia Ann
- **Sex:** Girl
- **Name and surname of father:** Joseph William Seaby
- **Name and surname and maiden surname of mother:** Florence Ann Seaby formerly Brill
- **Occupation of father:** Greengrocer (journeyman)
- **Residence of informant:** of 9 Radnor Walk Chelsea
- **Father’s signature:** J A Seaby
- **Mother’s signature:** FA Seaby
- **Period of registration:** 9 Radnor Walk SW3
- **Registrar’s signature:** J E Clark
- **Date of birth:** Eighth of April 1938

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**General Register Office**

**Look at Pat Seaby’s birth certificate and the Prudential Insurance certificate below.**

- **Why do you think Joe Seaby took out this policy?**

![Birth Certificate](image1)

![Prudential Insurance Certificate](image2)
Doing the Lambeth Walk

When Patsy Ann was born in 1938 a cockney song ‘The Lambeth Walk’ was the hit song of the day. It came from the 1937 musical ‘Me and My Girl’ about a flash Cockney barrow boy who inherits an earldom but almost loses his Lambeth gal—his girlfriend. Costers like Joe were flashy dressers who made the most of life when times were good. Joe knew war was on the horizon, but as a coster his motto was: “Spend it while you’ve got, tomorrow you may die.”

Any time you're Lambeth way,
Any evening, any day,
You'll find us all
Doing the Lambeth Walk. Oi!

Every little Lambeth gal,
With her little Lambeth pal,
You'll find them all
Doing the Lambeth Walk. Oi!

Everything's free and easy,
Do as you darn well pleasly,
Why don't you make your way there
Go there, stay there.

Once you get down Lambeth way
Every evening, every day,
You'll find yourself
Doing the Lambeth Walk. Oi!
Just a month after Patsy Ann was born, in May, 1938, England played Germany in Berlin. With the threat of war in the air, the England team were ordered to keep the Nazis happy by giving the Sieg Heil salute before kick-off.

How would these footballers feel about politicians forcing them to give the Sieg Heil salute?

- Should we always do what we are told without question? Are there times when we should ignore authority?

Stanley Matthews, Stoke was probably the greatest footballer in the World at the time of this match. The Nazis expect him to play and give the salute before the game. He said, ‘The request caused uproar in the changing room before the match.’

Don Welsh, Charlton was the Addicks’ captain and was making his debut for England in this game. If he refuses to give the salute he will be dropped and might never play for England again.

Eddie Hapgood, Arsenal was England’s captain. If he refuses to salute it will create a major diplomatic incident. ‘The worst moment of my life, and one I would not willingly go through again, was giving the Nazi salute in Berlin.’

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Vic Woodley, Chelsea faces stiff competition to be England goalkeeper. If he fails to salute he will be dropped.

Stan Cullis Wolves was the only player to refuse to salute. Hitler and the Nazis are evil and we must take a stand against them. Principles mean more to me than England caps.

Sir Neville Henderson was British Ambassador to Germany. He does not want the England players to upset Hitler before he meets Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain for peace talks.

The England players must do as they are told, just as a private soldier must obey an officer in war. If we upset the Germans who knows what might happen.

I refuse to give the Nazi salute. Hitler and the Nazis are evil and we must take a stand against them. Principles mean more to me than England caps.
Outbreak of War September 3rd 1939

Propaganda
is information that is not objective and often biased that is used to influence an audience. This example was published in the Kentish Independent newspaper on September 7th, 1939. The cartoonist uses the dogs to create stereotypes of each nation involved in the outbreak of WW2.

A The cartoonist hints here where WW2 started. Where was this?

What does the cartoonist say this country is doing to Fury the Mad Dog?

B The Nazi Dog is a:

Write an adjective(s) describing it:

C The French dog is a:

Write an adjective(s) describing it:

D The British dog is a:

Write an adjective describing it:

Who personified this image?

Imperial War Museum

Kentish Independent Bexley Local Studies and Archives
Taking care of the People

With war imminent in 1938, the government realised they would need to take a much more active role in the lives of the people of Britain if they were to keep people safe from the dangers that lay ahead.

Pat’s future husband, John Daniel, outside their Anderson shelter

The war made the government accept that they would have to intervene in British people’s lives.

- How many ways of intervening can you see in the posters and pictures above?
- How do you think this spirit of intervention helped to create the NHS at the end of the war?
First Day of the Blitz: September 7th 1940

The Woolwich Arsenal and the Royal Docks were the German targets on September 7th, 1940 – IWM
First Day of the Blitz: September 7th 1940

William Daniel cycled to work from 29 Quadrant Bexleyheath to Siley Weirs Ship repairers in the Royal Docks during WW2

William Daniel lived at 29 The Quadrant Bexleyheath with his wife Ivy and children Mavis (11), Maureen (9), Brian (5) and John (3). He was a former ship’s engineer, who now worked repairing steam ships at Siley Weirs in the Royal Docks. Mavis, Maureen and Brian had been evacuated leaving only John and Ivy at home. On 7th September he would witness the Blitz first hand. After returning home on his bicycle he had to go out on fire watch as an ARP warden around King Harold’s Way.
William Daniel cycled back through the devastation caused by the daylight raid on the docks on the 7th September 1940 known as ‘Black Saturday’. He managed to get back to his bungalow in Bexleyheath, but after grabbing a brief bite to eat with his wife Ivy and son John, he was out that night along his ARP warden’s beat along King Harold’s Way, Bexleyheath, as the German bombers returned to bomb the fires that they had created during the day. The map below shows how the German bombers flew over the route he took to work to the Royal Docks.
Joe, Dibs, Patsy Ann and Dib’s Mum Flo were living at 9, Radnor Walk, Chelsea, when war broke out in 1939. On 7th September 1940, they spent 14 hours in a public shelter, whilst the Germans unleashed their first heavy raid on London. Joe’s soldier cousin, Dick Seaby, wrote to the family immediately he heard of the raids on the wireless (radio).
Dear Dibby & Joe & Patsy Ann, Thankyou very much for your letter. I only expect to be at the above address for a day or two. Then we are moving to Norwich. I have been transferred from my company to 35 Group Headquarters, so I have not got a bad little job. It is something to do with the messroom. I am sorry to hear that you have to spend that part of the night in a shelter. It must be pretty bad there. Arthur wrote and told me that you had bombs drop in the... continued
First Day of the Blitz: September 7th 1940

The first day of the Blitz on September 7th 1940 has been compared to the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York with regard to the psychological effect it had on people who lived through both attacks. In this letter Joe Seaby ‘put on twenty years in 14 hours’ as he sheltered with his young family from the raid.

Joe was a costermonger—a barrow boy—at North End Road street market in Fulham. The Blitz devastated his trade as people were too scared to come out to the market.

The terrible impact of the war is written on Joe Seaby’s face in this picture taken in the army in 1942.

...house at the back of you. He also said that Joe had put on twenty years in fourteen hours. It must have shook you up a bit. I feel really sorry for you. We get plenty of warnings but never had any bombs drop yet. When we get to Norwich I shall be able to get a weekend leave so I expect to be seeing you soon. I hope that your brother Jim is getting on alright. The air raids must be affecting the trade in the road* so it must be pretty rough going for you and Joe. The place where we are at now...

*road
...is smashing. We get hot and cold showers, plenty of grub and a good bed so I have not much to grumble at. I have just been listening to the wireless and all I can hear is raids on London. I do hope that all of you keep out of danger. This is the only thing that I regret, we are up here out of danger and you are down there getting bomb to pieces. Well goodbye for now. I shall be writing again soon.

Best of luck

Dick
Was there a Blitz spirit?

When the Blitz began the government was very keen to promote the Blitz spirit i.e. to carry on as normal. Newspapers promoted stories that showed great calm in face of the bombing e.g. football during the Blitz. Less than a mile from Radnor Walk, Chelsea were playing Brentford when the bombs began to fall. Spotters raised the air raid warning with Chelsea leading 2-1. The team including goalkeeper Vic Woodley took to the shelters and the game was abandoned. Across London, close to the docks and Woolwich Arsenal, which the Germans planes were targeting, Charlton and Millwall continued to play as planes were being shot down.

Source 1: Keep Calm and Carry On

A spotter at Charlton’s Valley ground during a wartime match

IWM

West London Observer - Friday 13 Sept 1940

Kentish Independent Sat 14 Sept 1940
Was there a Blitz Spirit?

Source 2: Doing your bit

The strain of the Blitz brought people together. Ordinary people did amazing things. Dibs cousin, Gladys, took on the bombers from her anti-aircraft gun in Hyde Park, whilst her Mum Flo went out with one of the soldiers from 15th Bomb Disposal Squad, based near Radnor Walk, who risked their lives to defuse UXBs.

Source 3: Going Underground

After 7 September 1940 it became clear that there was not enough air raid shelters for everyone. Public anger rose, and people felt that it was time to take the responsibility into their own hands and ignore a government that seemed to have shown a contempt for ordinary people. It had been forbidden to use the tube, but people now ignored government instructions and occupied it. The government had to bow to pressure, and began to supply bunk beds and toilets for the tube dwellers. Nightly, a community of 60,000 would convene underground in London. A community was born, and the first victory for the people was won.

The Blitz had a massive psychological effect on those who went through it. Look at sources 1-3

- Which of sources 1-3 best fits with the idea of the Blitz spirit i.e. carrying on as normal?
- Which of the sources 1-3 does not fit with the idea of the Blitz spirit?
- How do you think the Blitz experience shaped how Britain changed as a country after WW2?
- Do you think Joe Seaby showed the Blitz Spirit during the raid of 7th September 1940?
CREATING THE BLITZ SPIRIT

On 15.9.1940, eight days after Dicky’s letter arrived, one of the most dramatic events of the Battle of Britain occurred a short distance from Radnor Walk, Chelsea.

BLITZ OVER CHELSEA

The sound of the sirens from far then near places, stopping us playing to upturn our faces.
Irregular throbbing o’er blue Chelsea skies, as we raise up our hands to shelter our eyes.
Heinkels, Dorniers, these strange flying things, flickered the sunlight with hundreds of wings.
I made sure I hid away from Mum’s sight, before she could stop me from watching this fight.
I then heard my Dad out calling my name, but skulked low in silence enjoying this ‘game.’
Then we saw some Hurricanes, clawing for height, sent above Chelsea to join in the fight.
I heard his Merlin* and stuttering gun, as Sergeant Holme’s fighter screamed out of the sun, Observers were scattered about by the battle, as Ray Holmes*’s 8 Brownings* let loose their death rattle.
And when the collision took place overhead, We all of us thought our brave hero was dead.
The Dornier fell down on Victoria station, as Ray Holmes’s received a standing ovation.
He fell on a roof top, thrilling the crowds, Who’d followed his parachute down from the clouds, A warden shouted, "Thank God he’s about, he’ll soon force the Luftwaffe to give up and get out."
But high in the heavens was more for the eye, long woven contrails divided the sky.
Whirls of dark smoke showed, where fighters had spun, sparkling bright cockpits reflected the sun.
We all heard the warring sounds gradually fade, and gaped at the sky at the sketches they’d made.

Peter Daniel 2018

*The Hurricane was powered by a Rolls Royce Merlin II engine
*Holmes’s Hurricane Mk I had eight Browning Machine guns

“The BBC wanted to interview me. ‘But sir, what about Official Secrets?’

‘To hell with secrecy—give them the lot. The censor will cut out what they mustn’t use, and the public, bless ‘em, are panting for something to cheer them up.’

The Battle of Britain—Contrails cover the sky Paul Nash IWM
In November 1940, with the Blitz at its height. Joe Seaby was called up to the army. He was terrified at the thought of leaving his wife Dibs and daughter Pat to the danger of the German air raids, but had no choice. In July 1942, he left England to fight in North Africa. The map on p50 shows the journeys he would make over the next four years. He did not return to 9, Radnor Walk, Chelsea until February 1946. His daughter Pat was four when he left and eight when he returned. The war left its own mark on him, but it was the Blitz that brought the dreadful reality of war to him for the first time and how it could effect his family.
There is a reason Joe Seaby didn’t smile in any of his pictures. When he went to Hounslow barracks in 1941 for his medical, his teeth were so bad that the army decided that he would have to have all of them taken out. They could not take the risk of losing a soldier in the field through dental problems.

During the Boer War 1900-02, out of 208,000 troops in Africa 6,900 had dental problems. Despite this, when Joe’s brother Arthur went to war in August 1914, the army went to France without a single dentist! WW2 revealed similar problems. The birth of the NHS in 1948 saw a deluge of demand to remove rotten teeth and to replace these with dentures. A million sets were distributed in the first nine months of the service. The NHS could not cope and charges for dentures were introduced in 1951 leading to the resignation of Aneurin Bevan, the Minister who had been crucial in bringing the service into being.

**Teeth**

English Teeth, English Teeth!
Shining in the sun
A part of British heritage
Aye, each and every one.
English Teeth. Happy teeth!
Always having fun
Clamping down on bits of fish
And sausages half done.
English Teeth! HEROES’ Teeth!
Hear them click and clack!
Let’s sing a song of praise to them –
Three Cheers for the Brown Grey and Black.

**Spike Milligan**

Comedian Spike Milligan served like a Joe as a soldier in N Africa and Italy in WW2.
In July 1942 Pte. Joe Seaby is given two weeks embarkation leave before leaving for an unknown destination overseas. He decided to go on a big family holiday to East Peckham Hop Farm, near Tonbridge, Kent. For many years poor London families would take a paid holiday harvesting the hops needed to make beer.

Read the First Day of the Blitz letter and the Fields of Gold lyrics:
- Choose a character from the picture above.
- Do you think this is a happy or sad scene?
- In the thought bubble, write how your character would be feeling when the picture was taken.
You'll remember me when the west wind moves upon the Kentish hop fields,
You'll forget the sun in his jealous sky as we walk the fields of gold.
But he took her hand for to say goodbye among the Kentish hop fields,
And she held him fast as the sun went down among the fields of gold.
Will you stay with me, will you keep me safe among the Kentish hop fields?
We'll forget the song of the cannon fire as we lie in fields of gold.
But the west wind turned as he held her hand among the Kentish hop fields,
And the tears came down as he said goodbye among the fields of gold.

A war makes fools of promises, and war plays loose with hope,
But in my heart I pray, we will walk in fields of gold.
In a foreign field where the bullets fly, there are no fields of barley,
If they cut me down who will see you cry? Will they keep you from the cold?
This war makes fools of promises and it may break my hope,
But in my heart I pray, we will walk in fields of gold,
We will walk in fields of gold.

Many years have passed since they said goodbye among the Kentish hop fields,
See the children run as the sun goes down among the fields of gold.
Oh! remember us when the west wind moves upon the Kentish hop fields.

Build a brighter day where we share the sky and we walk on fields of gold
Where we walk on fields of gold,
Where we walk on fields of gold.

Vincent Burke after Sting 2018

Was the NHS part of the ‘brighter day’ Vince Burke sings about in the final verse?

• Can you write another verse of the Fields of Gold song-linked to creation of NHS in 1948?
Private Joe Seaby’s Journey to War

Before WW2 Joe Seaby had never been further from Chelsea than a day trip to Brighton or a trip to the Kentish hop fields.

Just to get to the war Joe had to travel through several countries. His journey began in London and ended in Italy. Can you name the counties he went through when he arrived at:

- CAPE TOWN?
- BOMBAY?
- BAGHDAD?
- CAIRO?

P Daniel
Mid-way through the war, people wanted a vision of a brighter future, a ‘New Jerusalem’ that made the sacrifices worthwhile. In 1942, William Beveridge, a member of the wartime government, proposed a new system of social security, which would include everyone and provide benefits ‘from the cradle to the grave’ and tackle what he saw as the 5 Giant Evils of society.

**THE FIVE GIANTS**

Beveridge believed that **want**, disease, **ignorance**, squalor and idleness stood in the way of social progress.

- **WANT**: Too many people were living below the poverty line.
- **IGNORANCE**: Too many children left school at 14 without any qualifications and went into low paid jobs.
- **SQUALOR**: Many people lived in overcrowded slums and there was a shortage of good houses.
- **DISEASE**: Many people suffered from poor health because they could not afford medical treatment.
- **IDLENESS**: Unemployment was very high before the war and caused poverty.

What would a child, like Patsy Ann, have thought about the 5 giants? Write a poem from her perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS</th>
<th>YOUR POEM</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose one of the 5 Giants WANT, Ignorance, Squalor, Disease, Idleness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Write 2 Adjectives to describe your giant (It’s better if they alliterate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a fact about how your chosen giant would impact on a child’s future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Either use a simile or personification to describe your giant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe a sight or sound associated with your chosen giant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a feeling you would associate with your giant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a metaphor in place of your giant.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Italian Campaign Map 1943-1945

Royal Fusiliers
Start Salerno
September 1943

Castle Miramare, Trieste 1945
Final Christmas away from home

Joe’s final destination in Italy during WW2 was Trieste. The H.Q. Battalion were billeted in the magnificent Castle Miramare.

Joe Cairo
1943

Many letters home were microfilmed before being sent home to England to save space on the mail planes.

Having taken part in the end of the North African campaign in Tunisia Pte Joe Seaby was part of the 56 London Division landing in mainland Italy.
Joe Seaby was called up to the Royal Fusilier on November 29th 1940 and did his initial training at Hounslow Barracks. He became Fusilier Joe Seaby. Fusilier is derived from the 17th-century French word fusil – meaning a type of flintlock musket—a rifle that did not create a flash in the pan to give away its position to the enemy. The regiment’s headquarters today are at the Tower of London and that is where most of its recruits originally came from.

Royal Fusilier shoulder flash

56 (LONDON) Infantry insignia
“The Black Cats”
The symbol is the black cat of legendary Lord Mayor of London Dick Whittington

8th Battalion Royal Fusilier combat flash. Each battalion of the Fusiliers had a different coloured bomb

Helmet has netting to avoid shine and to tuck leaves for camouflage. It was also a great place to tuck small items that you would fill up pockets – e.g. cigarettes

Royal Fusilier regimental badge
Motto: “Evil (or shame) be to him that evil thinks.”

Lee Enfield Rifle

Rifle had a clip of six 303 bullets

Entrenching tool to create a slit

Bedding roll

Water bottle

Italy 1943-45

Helmet has netting to avoid shine and to tuck leaves for camouflage. It was also a great place to tuck small items that you would fill up pockets – e.g. cigarettes
In the Autumn-Winter 1944, Joe’s Royal Fusiliers faced the most terrible weather imaginable. The men were entertained by a cartoon, “The Two Types” that made fun of the idea that the soldiers were enjoying themselves in “Sunny Italy”.

In the winter of 1944 Joe wore the standard dress of the British Tommy, with a wool-lined leather jerkin, woollen scarf and gloves for added warmth. His insignia are the black cat of 56 London Division and the 8th Battalion Royal Fusiliers.
Salerno landings 9th September 1943

Salerno, 9 September 1943 (Operation Avalanche): British troops land on the Salerno beaches. © IWM (NA 6630)
Operation Avalanche was the invasion of the Italian mainland near Salerno. Joe’s ship carrying him and other members of the Royal Fusiliers sailed from Tripoli on 8 September. On the way to Salerno they heard Italy had surrendered and thought that the invasion would be an uncontested stroll onto the beach. But in reality, Germans had replaced the Italians in defence; thereby making the assault more difficult, not less.

56th London Division (The Black Cats) landed just south of Salerno on beaches codenamed Uncle, Sugar, and Roger on 9 September 1943. The Royal Fusiliers were immediately involved in an extremely fierce contest for the beaches. They ran into five German flamethrower tanks. Lacking tanks of their own, the Fusiliers suffered heavy and horrible casualties to these mechanized dragons.

Victor comic April 5th 1975 ran a cartoon that highlighted the bravery of the 8th Royal Fusiliers at the Salerno landings.
Private Joe Seaby at Salerno

Royal Fusiliers boarding transports at Tripoli before the invasion at Salerno - 5 September 1943  IWM

Royal Fusiliers sniping from a window at Salerno, September 10 1943  IWM

9th Royal Fusiliers with a Piat anti tank gun Sept 10 1943 Salerno. These were not much use against Tiger tanks IWM
Mentally scarred for life at Anzio

Anzio scarred Joe for life. He saw things he could never speak about. Writing to his mum on July 27th, 1944, he was pessimistic about the future after the war.

“And there is a story possibly of the war ending this year. If only it will come true. There is such a lot to make up for and a hell of a lot that we can never make up and I guess when all is said and done and the future comes to past it will be labour in vain. I have been thinking about it. Our hopes and plans are maybe things we can never regain.”

Dibs said that the Joe that returned from Italy after the war was not the man who had left.

- Why do you think Joe was so pessimistic about the future?
- Listen to Pink Floyd’s song: “When the Tigers Broke Free.”
- Look at the lyrics of the song. How did the fighting at places like Anzio change men like Joe?
- How did it effect the men’s families
When the Tigers Broke Free

It was just before dawn
One miserable morning in black ’forty four
When the forward commander
Was told to sit tight
When he asked that his men be withdrawn
And the Generals gave thanks
As the other ranks held back
The enemy tanks for a while
And the Anzio bridgehead
Was held for the price
Of a few hundred ordinary lives
And kind old King George
Sent mother a note
When he heard that father was gone
It was, I recall
In the form of a scroll
With gold leaf adorned
And I found it one day
In a drawer of old photographs, hidden away
And my eyes still grow damp to remember
His Majesty signed
With his own rubber stamp
It was dark all around
There was frost in the ground
When the tigers broke free
And no one survived
From the Royal Fusilier Company Z
They were all left behind
Most of them dead
The rest of them dying
And that’s how the High Command
Took my daddy from me

Songwriter: Roger Waters

Roger Waters, star of Pink Floyd, was just five months old when his father, 2nd Lt Eric Waters died when the Royal Fusilier were attacked by Tiger tanks at Anzio on February 18, 1944.

Roger’s album “The Wall” sold 19 million copies worldwide. Roger blamed the generals for sacrificing his father and his album was a rage against authority.
Victoria Hospital for Sick Children

Victoria Hospital for Sick Children was opened in 1866 in Tite Street, Chelsea when a group of wealthy residents raised funds to convert Gough House into a hospital for ‘poor afflicted children’. The first medical officer was Sir William Jenner, physician to Queen Victoria. It was enlarged in 1875. By 1890 the out patients department was treating 1,500 children a week. New buildings were added in 1905 providing 100 beds. It became part of the St George's Hospital group and moved to the main hospital in Tooting in 1964. This photograph shows the hospital shortly before its demolition in 1966.

War Service Emergency Grant 1944

When Patsy Ann contracted scarlet fever at Christmas 1943, she was admitted to the Victoria Hospital for Sick Children in Tite Street, Chelsea, London SW3.

Patsy Ann was treated with UV rays

Joe Seaby’s 33rd birthday was at Anzio on 2nd February 1944. His daughter Pat sent him a card as she recovered from scarlet fever.

Patsy Ann was treated with UV rays
Scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough and diptheria were the main causes of infant death throughout the Victorian era and into the 20th century. This log book from a Pimlico primary school shows the devastating impact this could have.
At Christmas 1943 Patsy Ann Seaby became seriously ill with scarlet fever. With husband Joe fighting at Anzio, Patsy-Ann’s mother, Dibs Seaby, struggled to pay the medical bills. In desperation she applied for a War Service Emergency grant.
At Christmas 1943 Patsy Ann Seaby became seriously ill with scarlet fever. With husband Joe fighting at Anzio, Dibs struggled to pay the medical bills. In desperation she applied for a War Service Emergency grant.

Choose a character from the picture below.
- Write in the thought bubble below how your character would be feeling.
To: Mrs P.A. Seaby
9 Radnor Walk, Chelsea, London, SW3, England

Soldiers address: Fus J.W, SEABY 6178776 56 (LON) DIV HQ D.E.P. CMF

9.2.44

Dear Patsy,

Just a line in answer to your letter and to say how glad I have been to hear that you are almost better and soon be out again. I am sorry that I have not sent your cards yet but I hope to send them soon. When I do I will write and tell Mummy then she will let you know when to wait for the postman. Mummy tells me that you looked very nice in your bridesmaids frock. I am hoping that Aunt Betsy will send me some photos with you in it as I am longing to see what you look like. I know that you are getting a big girl now. It will soon be your birthday. I will try and send you your cards and a letter if not a telegram. It is Mummy’s next month. I want you to give her a big kiss for me also one every night too. I am very pleased to hear that you like school and you are the best girl in your class as Mummy tells me that’s what you tell her anyway. You can write me letters now as I can read them that’s good enough for me. I want to say how pleased I am for your Christmas aerograph—it was very nice. Well Pat I shall have to end now, but hope to write again soon so don’t forget to kiss Mummy for me and say that’s from Daddy with all his love. So cheerio Darling till next time. God Bless you and watch over you.

From your Daddy xxxxxx

PS Dearest I hope that she will like this. Let me know what she says when you read it to her.

"Mummy tells me that you looked very nice in your bridesmaids frock."
Joe wrote to Lew and advised him to make good use of slit trenches to save himself from shrapnel bursts from exploding shells.

“Well Lew the news from home is good now. Of course you know that Patsy’s baby has been in hospital. My Rooney has been ill for about 6 weeks, but thank God they are now all fit and well. How much will they have grown by the time we get home?”

-Letter from Pte Joe Seaby on February 2nd, 1944 to his soldier friend, Private Lew Baylis
Before becoming a soldier Joe Seaby worked on North End Road market, Fulham as a costermonger, or barrow boy. Barrow boys are famous for their cockney rhyming slang. Can you translate his story using the table below?

**DAY BREAK AT ANZIO**

Pte Joe Seaby woke up in a slit trench at Anzio and found himself on his **tod**. Last night the Germans had attacked and the Fusilier had to **scarper**. Joe had used his **loaf** and kept his head down, otherwise he would have been **brown bread**. The **currant bun** was starting to rise, so Joe had a **butchers** at the **dickory dock** on the ruined church tower. He couldn’t **Adam and Eve** it was nearly time for him to run the rations up to the front line again. Looking to cheer himself up, he decided to read an unread letter from Dibs, his **trouble and strife**. He hadn’t heard a **dicky bird** from her for a long while, as her letters were slow reaching the Anzio Beachhead. What he read put him in a right **two and eight**. Poor Patsy Ann was **Tom and Dick** and Dibs didn’t have the **bread and honey** to pay the doctor…£6! That doc must be having a **giraffe**! Joe immediately started writing two letters; one to an **old china** of his, to see if he would lend them a **Lady Godiva**, and one to Dibs advising her to apply for a War Service Emergency Grant.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cockney Rhyme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Cockney Rhyme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tod Sloan</td>
<td>alone</td>
<td>Trouble and strife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scapa flow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dicky bird</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaf of bread</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two and eight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown bread</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tom and Dick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currant bun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bread and honey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchers hook</td>
<td></td>
<td>Giraffe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickory dock</td>
<td></td>
<td>Old China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam and Eve</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lady Godiva</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The men who served at Anzio felt a special and unique bond:

“Our platoon was very close. We were all compact with each other. We all knew each other. What our failings were an our strengths our likes and our dislikes. They were a good bunch and we looked after each other—that’s what made it terrible when someone was killed—it was like losing a very close brother.”

PRIVATE RAY FORT ROYAL FUSILIERS ANZIO FEBRUARY 1944

“It is true that all of us were in the same boat: we were there to stay or die. But it is not true that such a situation always creates a brotherhood. I have never seen anything like it in the two World Wars of my experience. There was at Anzio a confidence in unity, an unselfish willingness among troops to help one another that I never saw again.”

AMERICAN GENERAL ERNEST HARMON

WRITING A LETTER FROM ANZIO

- How would the soldiers feeling of brotherhood help the NHS to get off the ground?
- Write a letter from Anzio in role of Joe Seaby to his wife Dibs about daughter Pat’s illness.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I’m so sorry for not writing sooner...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Apologise for not writing sooner but explain you are in the Anzio Beach Head.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. I think that....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Say how sad you are to hear that Rooney (Patsy Ann has been so ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe your anger that Dibs is worrying about having to pay the bills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask Dibs where she is being treated.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. The reason I say this is because</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Describe why you are angry. You are risking in your life for your country and your family should be supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how unselfish soldiers at Anzio are and how you would hope that brotherhood could continue after the war.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>4. Also</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mention the Beveridge plan and how all of the soldiers are talking about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Argue that good health care should be a right not a privilege.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Some people will argue that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explain that some politicians like Churchill have argued against some of Beveridge’s ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State that some people say we could never have free health care because the doctors would not accept it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>6. However, I think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how there has to be a reward for all the sacrifices people have made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s your 33rd birthday and you will be spend it along again. You will not get that time back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain that as well as fighting for your comrades you fight for a better fairer future for Patsy Ann</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cheerio and Keep Smiling Joe Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
“It was the 3rd January 1945 and I was walking with my mum (Dibs) to school (St Joseph’s, Cadogan Street) when we saw a sudden flame in the sky, followed by a massive explosion. We had thrown ourselves into a doorway to escape the blast of what proved to be a V2 rocket falling on the Royal Hospital. As the dust and debris cleared, Mum started laughing. We’d sheltered from the blast in an undertakers doorway!”

Pat Daniel, nee Seaby June 2017

The North East Wing took a direct hit from a V2 rocket; the wing was completely destroyed and many surrounding buildings were significantly damaged. Five people from the Royal Hospital lost their lives as a result of this attack and 19 others were injured.
Victory in Europe May 8th 1945

Private Joe Seaby marched the length of Italy in all weathers. His final destination was Trieste in the far north of Italy. He did not get home for VE Day but celebrated victory by diving into a vat of Cinzano with his comrades. As part of the HQ battalion he stayed at the Castle Miramare and it was from here that he sent his final Christmas away from his family there.
Victory in Europe Day, (V-E Day) May 8, 1945 marked the surrender of Nazi Germany and celebrations across Britain. Street parties took place all over London. However, a huge re-building job lay ahead.

KNEES UP MOTHER BROWN

Knees up Mother Brown
Knees up Mother Brown
Under the table you must go
Ee-aye, Ee-aye, Ee-aye-oh
If I catch you bending
I'll saw your legs right off
Knees up, knees up
Never get the breeze up
Knees up Mother Brown
Oh my, what a rotten song
What a rotten song What a rotten song
Oh my, what a rotten song
And what a rotten singer
Too-oo-oooh!

Patsy Ann’s Victory certificate

The stall North End Road
Towards a New Jerusalem

Joe was finally able to leave the army in April 1946 having been called up in November 1940. In 1946 Clement Attlee’s government promised returning soldiers they would conquer the ‘5 Giants’ and build a ‘New Jerusalem’, a better fairer Britain that would be symbolised by the creation of the NHS.

Joe’s army demob papers

Joe was given a National Insurance stamp card when he left the army. Contributions would be acknowledged by a stamp that would provide access to welfare payments and eventually the new NHS service.
Joe and Dibs

Joe got through the difficult war years and returned to his stall on North End Road. He never went abroad again as he was happy to stay with Dibs in Chelsea until she died in 1982. Joe died in 1994 and this poem belonged to him.

We met and we married a long time ago
We worked long hours when wages were low
No TV or wireless, no baths-times were hard
Just cold water taps and a walk in the yard.
No holidays abroad, no posh carpets on floors
But we had coal on the fire and we didn’t lock doors.
Our children arrived, a real home we made,
and we brought them up without any State aid.
I don think of the hard times, the trouble, the tears
I remember the blessings, our home and our love,
We shared them together and thanked God above.
Bevan was one of the most important ministers in Attlee’s government and was the chief architect of the NHS.

“ILLNESS IS NEITHER AN INDULGENCE FOR WHICH PEOPLE HAVE TO PAY NOR AN OFFENCE FOR WHICH THEY SHOULD BE PENALISED, BUT A MISFORTUNE THE COST OF WHICH SHOULD BE SHARED BY THE COMMUNITY.”

FOUNDER OF NHS ANEURIN BEVAN (1897–1960)
DID RETURNING SERVICEMEN SUPPORT BEVAN?

Soldiers were overwhelmingly in favour of the Beveridge plan. They wanted to think that the sacrifices they had made would lead to a fairer more equal Britain. Private John Hibbett’s story shows how inspired they were.

On New Years Eve 1944 John and Ann were hundreds of miles apart. He was working in a Polish coal mine, fed on a diet of potato peels. Ann had volunteered to be an ambulance driver. Her letters rarely reached John. He ticked off the days in his army pay book but his strong faith kept him looking to the future. As the hours counted down to midnight, he wrote the poem on p77 in his old pay book.

At Christmas 1944, John and Ann Hibbett faced very uncertain futures as the war ended. Childhood sweethearts, they had married on March 16th 1939. John had volunteered to join the Royal West Kent Regiment and was captured at Dunkirk in May 1940. Their strong faith held them together as he became a P.O.W.
A Brave New World

New Year’s here on a foreign Clime;
In a foreign land we resolve this time
No more war once this one’s over,
Eternal peace behind the cliffs of Dover,
True to our promise to those who fell,
Each of us living for the good of all,
Each of us digging a foundation stone
None of us building for ourselves alone,
Fashioning the future for years and years.

PRIVATE JOHN HIBBETT
STAMMLAGER POW CAMP POLAND
DECEMBER 31 1944

A Brave New World

Despite everything that was done to him John Hibbert never lost his faith in humanity. His belief in a brave new world, a fairer more equal society after the war would be realised in the creation of the NHS in 1948.

Shortly after writing this poem, John found himself in great danger. The Soviet army was advancing on Poland, and so the Nazis made the decision to evacuate the P.O.W. camps to prevent the liberation of the prisoners by the Russians. These evacuations were known as "The Long March"—many prisoners were to die on what became a death march. Before John Hibbert could be forced to march off, he escaped from the Polish farm he was working on with his best friend by borrowing clothes and disguising themselves as Polish women. John managed to escape to the Russian lines and got in touch with Ann just before V.E. Day. He asks her to find a home for them to share for his return. Soldiers like John supported Bevan’s plans for the NHS.
Churchill defeated at General Election

A general election was held on 5 July 1945, with polling delayed to allow time to transport the votes of those serving overseas. The result was a defeat for Winston Churchill and an unexpected landslide victory for Clement Attlee’s Labour Party who had campaigned on sweeping changes to bring in a Welfare State.

Although Churchill had been revered as prime minister, for the role he played in bringing victory in WW2, he was associated by the public with the pre-war government that had tolerated mass unemployment in 1930s.

David Low published a cartoon in the Evening Standard on 7th October, 1943, entitled The Good Old Days, in support of the Beveridge Report:

“As peril receded, old habits of thought reasserted themselves and voices were heard demanding the sacking of planners, the removal of controls and return to the old ways of free enterprise - with its corollaries, a ‘healthy’ margin of unemployment and the incentive of want.” David Low

‘The Good Old Days’ David Low  October 7th 1943


• What did ‘Equality of Sacrifice’ mean for returning soldiers?
• Did cartoonist David Low really think the time before the war were the ‘Good Old Days?’
Britain overwhelmed by debt in 1945

By the end of World War II Britain had amassed an immense debt of £21 billion. Much of this was held in foreign hands, with around £3.4 billion being owed overseas (mainly to creditors in the United States), a sum which represented around 230% of GDP (the whole wealth of the country). Churchill argued that Britain had to urgently rebuild a bomb damaged nation and repay this debt, so could not afford an ‘extravagant NHS.’
News Chronicle, Tues Aug 7, 1945. Doctors planned to trip up Bevan’s NHS on the day the atom bomb was dropped.

David Low, ‘Open Wide Please. This might hurt a little’ Evening Standard (July, 1948)

Look at David Low’s cartoons above.

- Why do you think the British Medical Association (Doctor’s association) object to the NHS?
On July 5th 1948 Aneurin Bevan’s dream was realised, when the NHS opened its doors for the first time. However, the government realised that the resources they had would struggle to meet demand.

Aneurin Bevan launched the NHS to the press in a blaze of publicity. The Evening Standard declared it, ‘A Free for All’ service. Many saw the NHS as a symbol of the arrival of a New Jerusalem—a fairer more equal Britain.

However, Politicians were soon worried that they would not be able to meet demand. The NHS produced leaflets seeking to curb demand (as shown by the area on the 1948 leaflet shown below highlighted in the red box). It cautions an enthusiastic public that, ‘no fairy wand was waved on July 5th.’
The pent up demand for health care from people who had never had access to doctors and dentists threatened to overwhelm the new National Health Service. There simply wasn’t enough trained doctors and nurses to run the system on such a scale. Consequently the government began to recruit skilled staff from abroad.

The Caribbean was a primary source of nurses. As early as 1949, the health and labour ministries launched recruitment campaigns that resulted in thousands of nurses arriving in Britain and being dispersed to hospitals all over the UK. Nurses also came from the West Indies and other parts of Britain’s former empire.

West Indian immigrants like Udine Canoville, who arrived in London, were optimistic about the future and looked forward to being part of building the new Britain that was being created. Udine left St Martin at 16 with a dream of being a nurse in the new NHS.

Lord Kitchener’s calypso hit, ‘London is the Place for Me’ sums up the optimism of the Windrush generation that arrived from the West Indies between 1948. and 1962.
The Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948, carrying 482 Jamaicans emigrating to Britain. Two weeks later Nye Bevan announced the creation of the NHS.

Look at the six characters below. Choose one and use the thought bubble to write down what they are thinking.

- **Derek Hales** has just been demobbed (left) the army
- **Lord Kitchener** is Trinidad’s Calypso King
- **Charles Chumley** is a recruitment officer for the NHS
- **Udine Canvoille** wants to be a nurse
- **Bob Danvers** Walker Pathe News Reporter
- **Jamaican Errol Richards** served in the RAF in WW2

Nye Bevan was the founder of the NHS. What do you think he meant by this quote?

- What was Nye Bevan’s dream?
- What had caused suffering to the British people?
- What would British people build to realise their dreams and heal their suffering?
Hubert Parry

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant Land

Words by William Blake

William Blake imagined a time when Britain would be a fairer more equal society. His idea was that it was possible to build a heaven on earth if everyone worked together.

Read the words of William Blake’s poem Jerusalem

- Why do you think some people describe the foundation of the NHS as the realisation of Blake’s dream?
Pat Daniel, nee Seaby, died on 10th February 2018, aged 79, after a two year battle with cancer. In her hour of need the NHS was there to care for her. This project is dedicated to her memory.
Dibs Seaby photographs Joe and Patsy Ann during Joe’s embarkation leave at East Peckham Hop Farm, near Tonbridge Kent, July 1942

Michael Foreman