Chapter 10

Communal Feeding in War Time: ‘British Restaurants’, 1940-1947

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Introduction

When asked to comment on the London County Council’s (LCC) plans for a history of wartime efforts to feed the capital’s blitzed population, one insider commented that ‘the story is worth telling ... we are recording an epic in history’.[1] Although this history was unfortunately never published, for subsequent generations food has always played an important part in imagining the experience of the nation at war.[2] Much of the literature has focused upon the supply chain (‘dig for victory’, 'the national farm’, import shortages), or rationing and its impact upon diet and nutrition. This leaves a gap for the present paper in the area of communal feeding. I will look at the curious and somewhat misunderstood institution of the British Restaurant (BR), which operated from 1941 to 1947 and arguably achieved a notoriety far beyond its numerical significance. In 1942 one commentator perceptively observed that BRs ‘may be said to have started as an improvisation and to continue as a compromise.’[3] The implication of this statement was of a lack of strategic foresight, yet there were some positive outcomes that are worth looking at, and also some unintended consequences.

The paper is divided into four parts. First, the origins and development of BR are analysed, particularly with regard to the rhetoric and hidden purposes of the Ministry of Food (MF) and of political interests more generally. Second, I will briefly introduce a regional perspective, which, as far as I am aware, has not been attempted before. Third, I will show that pulling together for the war effort was not a feature of the catering sector, where vitriolic criticism was made of the government’s communal feeding policies. Fourth, there is consideration of the food served in BRs.

The historiography of BRs is interesting in its own right. R.J. Hammond in his official three volume history of wartime food control devotes a whole chapter to them and this remains the most detailed account. I am intrigued by his approach, which

shows welcome irreverence towards the decision-making process of government and reveals tensions and rivalries within and between ministries. There is a degree of what one might call 'creative chaos under fire' in his narrative, especially in the early years when air raids threatened to cause widespread dislocation. Writing in the 1950s, Hammond presumably had access to the relevant civil servants and their 'inside stories', and certainly some of his interpretations go well beyond the evidence that has survived in the papers of the MF. Since Hammond there has been little of a critical nature written about BRs, although we a fortunate to have a contextualised commentary by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and, more recently, a book by James Vernon that touches on communal feeding.[4]

The present paper is mainly based on official material in the National Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives. In addition, I have looked at contemporary newspapers and magazines. What remains to be done is research at the local level because the records of the actions of Local Authorities have yet to be examined in record offices around the country.

Origins and Development

According to the official war history, early plans for emergency feeding were inchoate. The idea was soon dropped of reviving the National Kitchens that had figured in the First World War and there appears to have been some bickering between ministries about who should take on the responsibility of feeding in the event of enemy attacks. In the spring of 1940 the advent of Lord Woolton as Minister of Food, and then Churchill as Prime Minister, was something of a turning point. Already by July an experiment was being conducted by the MF on a working class housing estate in North Kensington.[5] Over 2000 hot meals per week were cooked on simple ranges, the choice being limited to popular dishes such as Irish stew and dumplings, or roast beef. A different main meal was cooked each day at an affordable price by volunteer labour. People's reactions seem to have been largely positive, although timeliness was identified as a key issue because workers and school children all needed to eat quickly in the short lunch period available to them. The Ministry was sufficiently encouraged by this project to envisage the scaling up of catering to meet local needs in what were to be called Community Feeding Centres.

In early September Woolton requested that the LCC should take the lead in providing communal feeding facilities.[6] The departure point was the need to help people unable to prepare meals for themselves due to temporary interruptions of gas, water and electricity services because of bombing.[7] These emergency facilities were important, in the words of Richard Titmuss, for absorbing the shock of air raids.[8] Called the Londoners' Meals Service (LMS), this was always separate from the BRs scheme. But in effect the two were similar, at least in post-blitz London, which was dominated by field kitchens and mobile canteens offering a 'cash and carry' service. The first indoor dining room was opened in Woolmore Street, Poplar on 24 October, 1940.[9] By Christmas, 139 LMS centres were producing a total of 80,000 meals a week. Many of the sites were schools, first because the buildings were increasingly available as children were evacuated, and, second, because the domestic science teachers and their facilities would otherwise have been unemployed and underutilised. The pricing formula was 'cost of food + 25 per cent + ½d for fuel,' working out at an affordable 9d or 10d for a two-course meal.

In November 1940 provincial local authorities were circulated, asking them to consider setting up what were now to be called Community Kitchens.[10] By the end of the year these had been established in major cities such as Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester and Newcastle upon Tyne. Progress was slow at first but the spread of air raids concentrated the minds of councils, as did the Minister's offer of financial assistance.[11]

Churchill disliked terminology such as 'Communal Feeding Centre' and 'Community Kitchen' as redolent 'of Communism and the workhouse'. In March 1941 he suggested instead the name 'British Restaurant' because the word 'restaurant' is associated positively in people's minds with 'a good meal'.[12] One modern branding professional sees this in retrospect as the masterstroke of someone who instinctively understood the difference between product and brand.[13]

The process of setting up BRs was fairly bureaucratic.[14] At first the Ministry insisted on approving all applications from the centre and the paperwork often took months, involving the allocation of equipment,[15] requisition of buildings and recruitment of staff.[16] To short-cut this process, some local authorities decided to open their own communal restaurants, as did voluntary organizations such as the National Council of Social Service and the Women's Voluntary Services.[17] The advantage of being inside the official system was that all capital costs were reimbursed. The

disadvantage was that Ministry officials continued to micro-manage, such as suggested menus, the monitoring of food quality and insistence on each outlet being financially self-supporting.[18]

Most BRs were run on the cafeteria principle.[19] The diners bought tickets and then queued up and chose food from a series of hot plates. From May 1941 onwards a number of cooking depots were set up around the country in order to supply food in bulk to the BRs and schools in that locality. My estimate is that about ten per cent of BR meals were supplied in this way and, surprisingly perhaps, the quality was said to have been indistinguishable from the meals prepared on site.[20]

BRs received allowances for rationed foods on the same scale as commercial catering establishments, although the quantities were higher where at least 60 per cent of the clientele were industrial workers, especially for those in Category B – heavy manual labour (Table 1).[21]

BRs were just one element of a broad government wartime food policy, which can be divided into the systematic (rationing, welfare foods, milk in schools) and the practical. The latter included provisions for day-to-day feeding (BRs, school canteens, factory and pithead canteens, and a rural pie scheme) and emergency feeding (cooking depots, emergency meals centres, rest centres, air raid shelter canteens, Queen's Messenger Convoys, and other mobile canteens).[22] This complexity was administered by three of the major ministries: Food, Education, and Labour.

As a result of this complexity, the term 'British Restaurant' was confusingly vague. We have already mentioned the dining rooms set up under the MF's scheme. These were supplemented by the LCC's LMS, by other local authority schemes, and by restaurants set up by voluntary organisations, all of them counted in official statistics as BRs but they often had no direct connexion with the government. In addition, evacuee feeding centres were sometime rebranded as BRs, as were school canteens that served meals on a daily basis to the general public.[23]

Rhetoric and Purpose

Why did the government favour BRs? They had apparently been hoping for 10,000, spread around the country but achieved only 1500 under their own scheme, and a peak of 2160 overall.[24] Essentially public rhetoric and private memoranda employed two types of argument.

First, there was cluster that we might call functionalist or utilitarian justifications. There were suggestions, for instance, that BRs served the war effort by improving efficiency in one way or another. In 1941 they were said, for instance, to be principally:

> To ensure that people who, owing to war conditions, have difficulty in securing meals, shall be able to have a least one hot nutritious meal a day at a reasonable price. Such people include those whose incomes have fallen, old age pensioners, and others with small fixed incomes, women engaged in war work, men whose wives and families have evacuated, and evacuated persons who have difficulties owing to limited domestic accommodation. School children are also catered for in a number of restaurants and this is the service is likely to expand very considerably.[25]

One reading of this statement is that BRs were a form of infilling where factory canteens were not provided, for instance in industrial districts dominated by workshops, and where local education authorities were not supplying school dinners.

Related to this was an economy of scale argument. Resources of various kinds were of course in short supply in wartime and BRs were said to economise on fuel to cook meals and labour to prepare and serve them.[26] Hidden beneath this was the point that, where communal facilities were available within easy walking distance, it became difficult for housewives to resist the call to work on the grounds that their domestic labour was irreplaceable.

The third sub-strand of the functional argument was that BRs provided cheap food that helped, admittedly in a very small way, to squeeze inflation out of the economy. Again there two ways of interpreting this because, as we will see below, the independent caterers objected very strongly to what they saw as unfair competition from officially sanctioned communal restaurants.

Fourth, nutrition was frequently cited as a justification for government-sanctioned feeding schemes. Dieticians were used in formulating menus and the Ministry deployed scientific expertise to analyse the content of meals. BRs were therefore a small cog in the larger engine of food policy that strove to improve health and working efficiency.

The political case for BRs was partly ideological and partly tied to wartime strategy. The first element was the subject of an unseen struggle in the coalition government between Conservatives, such as Woolton, and those who were left

leaning. The latter group constantly stressed that 'the restaurants are used mainly by the working classes and the lower paid professional and clerical classes',[27] with Ernest Bevin as Minister of Labour frequently demanding the expansion of industrial canteens,[28] whereas Woolton himself always stated that 'there is … no restriction in admittance to British restaurants; they are open to all members of the public'.[29] His justification for this was that BRs were intended for those involved in war work, and that this was not restricted to fighting or making munitions. They should therefore equally be open to shop assistants, office workers and housewives. Others, from the right, saw communal feeding as 'entirely abhorrent to the British way of life' and this divide was later to be a live political issue when the war ended but BRs continued.[30]

Second, a decision was made early on in the war not to close down commercial restaurants or to charge the food they served against people's rations.[31] Following on from this there was the oft heard accusation of waste and 'luxury feeding' in expensive restaurants, and in a sense BRs were a balancing measure, to give equivalent access, off the ration, to people who would otherwise have been unable to afford to eat out.

Related to this was a policy to make eating in a BR an uplifting experience.[32] The décor was lightened and even details such as the font of the lettering on notices were discussed. A few restaurants had live music and many had art, either newly painted murals or specially chosen prints. In short, here was a vehicle for raising morale and, judging by their responses to various surveys, the customers seem to have appreciated the food, the service, and the 'homely' atmosphere.

London and the Regions

In 1942 most local authorities with populations over 50,000 (mostly County and Municipal Boroughs) had adopted the BR idea. In the band 10,000 to 50,000 it was about a half, and a quarter for those authorities under 10,000.[33] Twelve local authorities each had 10 or more restaurants open, and London dominated with a quarter to a third of BRs nationally.[34] Table 2 shows regional variations at the scale of the Food Office District and, for the sake of comparison, some data is included on commercial catering premises from a census by the MF in 1940.

The BR was a typically British type of institution. Although it was anticipated that the enemy would bomb vital installations and maybe civilian targets, plans to deal

with the consequences were slow to recognise the need to feed displaced populations. Communal feeding in various guises was encouraged but the MF throughout the war avoided centralised compulsion. Instead they relied upon persuading local authorities to take responsibility for the particular circumstances of their area. In the opinion of Eric Biddle in 1942 this amounted to a redefinition of the role of the state at the level of local authorities.

> Government had previously been concerned with such matters as education, public assistance, parks and playgrounds, and utilities. But more vital matters, such as air raid precautions, life in shelters, the evacuation of children, or the operation of British Restaurants, required a greater understanding of the way of life of the people, their habits and desires, their hopes and fears. The relationship of the local official to the community as a whole in the pre-war period was an important one, but it was generally related to matters that were impersonal to most of the community. The emphasis has now changed to matters of vital personal concern for citizens.[35]

Initially there was some irritation in the Ministry at the attitude of some local authorities. Despite the inducements offered in the form of capital grants, guarantees against operating losses and professional advice on practical details, 'the vast majority' of councils by early 1941 had not welcomed the idea.[36] The reaction was said to have 'varied from true passive resistance to lukewarm acquiescence … The general retort to any approach … has been that a demand … does not exist in that particular town'.[37] Town Clerks apparently 'seized on any pretext for delay' and were especially exercised by the lack of a clear legal framework for action, for instance in the requisitioning of premises. This excuse disappeared on 28 January 1941 with the making of the Local Authorities (Community Kitchens) Order under Regulation 54B of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939. Nevertheless the government's non-aggressive policy was restated in a circular letter the following month:

> The Minister of Food does not wish to cause local authorities to set up Community Kitchens when the need does not exist, the intention of the Order is solely to give adequate authority for the establishment of Community Kitchens where there is need for them.[38]

In view of the resistance and apathy in some areas, it is not at all surprising that there was a great deal of geographical variation in implementation. Local politics

in Manchester, for instance, were said never to have been favourable to BR,[39] and, when pressed, the city authorities preferred to open outlets in the suburbs rather than in the city centre.[40] By contrast, Liverpool, Birmingham and Bristol bought into the concept at an early date and made substantial local provision. Even London had great diversity. The boroughs varied in their initiative and enthusiasm to the extent that Chelsea and Poplar had one restaurant per 8,000 people, whereas Stepney had one per 70,000.[41] Ellen Leopold attributes this at least partly to civil defence planning which encouraged the oversupply of facilities in west London for the benefit of evacuees who would have gone there from the south coast in the event of an invasion.[42]

The lack of directive planning by the MF was responsible for what we might call in the modern terminology 'food deserts' in some cities, while at the same time BRs were being proposed in inappropriate locations.[43] One such was the Welsh seaside resort of Tenby, whose normal population of 6,000 was swelled by 400 evacuees but which had 'no war work worth mentioning'. The restaurant established there served 150-200 meals a day, mainly to shop assistants, office workers and housewives, and made a profit. Another place identified was Burford, a small rural town in Oxfordshire. There was a strong local demand for a BR but official permission was refused on the grounds that none of the essential criteria were met.

There was also variance from town to town in practising the BR idea. Many were happy with a pared down version that meant trestle tables and benches, while for others the presentation of what they saw as a 'social service' was at the core of their civic pride. An example is the degree to which the price of meals (mostly lunch) were subsidised. In 1944, for instance, the vast majority were charged at 8d or 9d, but a quarter of authorities opted for less and some insisted on as much as 1s.[44]

Commercial Resistance to Civic Entrepreneurship

One explanation for geographical variations was the power of chambers of commerce in many localities. On behalf of the catering trade, they were opposed to central interference in the free market under the cover of war measures. Because of the intemperate language used, as follows, there were few qualms in government, but local politics were different.

> The Government decided to enter the catering business competitively – but with the unfair advantages of having priority of supplies and access to a large pool of voluntary labour. Meantime, very many private catering establishments were forced to shut down, owing to failure to obtain supplies and labour shortage … The Food Ministry is responsible for ruining hundreds of small caterers … Few, if any, of the communal feeding centres make a profit, or even strike a balance. The question arises, who covers the usual deficits? The answer is, of course, the public … Ratepayers will be mulcted in order to justify the Food Ministry's commercially unsound experiment.[45]

Private caterers could not produce a meal equivalent to that in BRs at a comparable price. A confidential estimate by the MF in 1946 was that a standard cafeteria meal costing 1s 3d in a BR was at least 1s 10d in a Lyons outlet.[46] One factor was that the Women's Voluntary Services assisted in about half of BRs: washing dishes and undertaking other routine tasks that otherwise would have had to be paid for.[47]

The rather crude initial objections of the industry were later nuanced with more considered arguments.[48] First, they commented that advertising by BRs was inappropriate in view of their role as a social service. Next, they asked why BRs were taking on catering for parties and weddings and the sale of flour confectionery (sausage rolls, meat pies, fruit tarts), in direct competition with local entrepreneurs. Finally, they wanted BRs to cease serving morning coffees and afternoon teas, which they claimed was outside the remit of providing hot lunches.[49] These points were difficult for the Minister to counter.

The official war history reveals the advantages enjoyed by BRs.[50] They benefited in effect from interest-free loans and the guaranteed write-off of any operating losses that were not too excessive. Their equipment was purchased centrally. They received professional advice on sites, equipment and food standards from ministry officials. To some extent this was balanced by the fact that many were in unsuitable premises, serving restricted menus, and with costs inflated by the payment of wages approved by the Joint Industrial Council that were above the catering industry norm. Direct comparisons with the private sector are therefore difficult.

On 12 January 1942 Woolton met with a deputation from the catering trade. He promised to look at representations about proposals for any new restaurants that

were said to be unnecessary in view of existing commercial provision. This was repeated in an answer to a parliamentary question two weeks later.[51]

Profitability was variable. In the financial year 1942-3, after allowing for the amortisation of capital, there was a net profit over 698 local authorities running BRs and this was repeated in 1943-4.[52] After the war, Gilbert Sugden found that civic restaurants were still mostly profitable in 1947-8, although some care is needed with his conclusions because authorities running loss-making portfolios of restaurants were forced to close them down.[53] This happened most famously to the LCC, whose costs soared, particularly rents in the city centre.

Opinions about alternatives were explored in the wartime social survey. In February 1943 a stratified sample of 4490 industrial workers found that 42 per cent had lunch at home, 22 used a canteen, 19 per cent ate sandwiches, and 11 per cent frequented cafés.[54] A 1944 survey of BR customers in Birmingham found that 62.6 per cent of respondents saw going home as their main option, and 11.2 per cent would have eaten sandwiches. Only 3.8 per cent considered a private restaurant or café.[55] Convenience seems to have been a major factor since over half of customers travelled five minutes or less for their meal and 91 per cent for fifteen minutes or less. Clearly this would not have been possible in cities with fewer outlets than Birmingham.[56]

One argument in favour of BRs was that they had played their part in the enormous increase during the war of eating out. On balance it was therefore likely that they had helped to increase trade for catering generally rather than competing with the private sector.[57]

The Food in British Restaurants

The MF from the outset thought carefully about the nutritional standard of meals served at BRs. In March, 1941, their dieticians prepared sets of menus, taking into account regional preferences, such as in Scotland.[58] The same year a booklet was issued entitled *Canteen Catering* that listed standard and special recipes, with suggestions for alternatives where supplies were short or variable.

Generally speaking, the food in BRs was said to be of good quality and filling.[59] There were some attempts to introduce meals in the Oslo style, with the intention of providing in one sitting all of the day's needs for animal protein, vitamins

and minerals.[60] But this met with resistance from customers who wanted their traditional meat and two vegetables.[61] Typical menus in practice were:

Soup	Soup	Soup
Fish and Potato Pie	Roast Joint and Stuffing	Liver Stew
Carrots and Potatoes	Potatoes, Swedes, Watercress	Cabbage, Potatoes
Bread and Butter Pudding	Bakewell Tart, Chocolate Sauce	Roly Poly Pudding, Custard

In Birmingham all 56 BRs had a choice of five meat dishes, five vegetables and five desserts, and those in the city centre had more. In other cities with less on offer, menus had to be removed from the entrances because customers would 'wander from one to another and the restaurant serving roast attracted the customer'.[62]

A meeting was held in June 1942 to request the collaboration of universities and research institutes around the country.[63] Dr Magnus Pyke, of the MF's Scientific Adviser's Division, chaired the meeting and he suggested a start with work on the vitamin C content of canteen meals. This was because restrictions on fruit intake transferred the onus of delivering vitamin C on to vegetables, and especially cabbage. There was concern that mass catering, particularly the use of hot cupboards, was destructive of this vitamin, so the research results were eagerly anticipated. It had initially been planned that a main meal in a BR would provide one third of the day's energy needs.[64] In practice, the survey found (Table 3) about 22 per cent of recommended calories in an average BR lunch. This was partly because the use of potatoes as a substitute for bread gave meals a bulky and unappetising appearance. Vitamin C was low in winter.[65]

Estimates made by the MF in 1941 indicate that the supplies required by BRs would never be more than a tiny fraction of the nation's overall stocks (Table 4). They were merely one among a suite of communal feeding options and, although never stated as such in official papers, their value was at least as much about presenting an active policy with a positive, morale-boosting face, as it was about nutrition.

Conclusion

An occasional trope of argument in the confidential papers of the MF was of sympathy for the plight of women and the promotion of BRs and other forms of

communal feeding as means of easing the burden of domesticity. This was always within a patriarchal framework but wartime needs did at least provoke a vocabulary that was repeated in an article in the *The Times*. A quotation will give the flavour:

> If women – and married women among them – are hereafter to play a fuller part in the social, it economic, and political life of the country, an extension of facilities for communal feeding is an essential part of a general scheme which includes the provision of crèches and nursery schools, as well as of labour-saving devices and other improved material conditions of living.[66]

Some writers in the past have suggested that the Second World War was a crucial threshold for women's employment and involvement in society more generally.[67] But the latest feminist research, while acknowledging women's vital role in wartime industry, rejects institutions such as communal feeding as of any long-term significance. Their facilitating role was minimal since the expectation upon working women was now of a double burden that included a return to all of the pre-war commitment to cooking and child care.

What then of the other achievements of the MF's BR policy? The functional arguments that I referred to above were modest in their outcome. The best we can say is that at the height of the war about half a million people a day (including children) received a cheap but nutritious meal that supplemented their rations. This filled a small niche in industrial feeding, particularly in the workshop cities such as Birmingham, but maybe less so in factory cities such as Manchester, where works canteens bore the burden.

Three methods of quantifying this impact were used at the time. The first, as used by the MF, was to look at the allocation of rationed foodstuffs such as meat, as a surrogate measure.[68] On this basis it was calculated that, in August 1941, BRs received 3.7 per cent of the catering total. Second, various estimates were made of the number of meals served. Again in 1941, BRs were calculated to have managed only 0.9 per cent of total, with commercial restaurants at 38.3 per cent, and industrial canteens at 14.5 per cent.[69] A 1942 version of the latter, given in a parliamentary answer, revealed somewhat different figures at 1.8, 57.1, and 41.0 per cent respectively.[70] And a retrospective enquiry at the end of the war found that BRs were

providing 3.5 per cent of main meals in January 1942, rising to 7.5 per cent by March 1944.[71]

The third approach was to ask the consumers where they ate. The wartime social survey in February 1943 found that only two per cent ate in BRs.[72] This is probably the most reliable figure, the instability in data above probably being due to the definition of a 'meal', which on occasions included tea or snacks, but on others was restricted to cooked main meals. Overall, we can say with confidence that BRs contributed only marginally to wartime feeding.

The more intangible political considerations are a little more positive. Most importantly perhaps, BRs contributed to a debate about communal feeding that continued after the war, but which ultimately ran into the sand at the mid-1950s political hinge point with the abolition of rationing in 1954 and entrenchment of Conservative ideals at the 1955 General Election.

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Table 1. Catering allowances per main meal, 1943

Food	Normal caterers	Allowances for industrial workers Category B	Category A
Bacon (oz.)	0.14	0.14	0.14
Fats (oz.)	0.30	0.50	0.50
Sugar (oz.)	0.12	0.12	0.20
Meat (oz.)	1.00	1.50	2.00
Fish (oz.)	0.32	0.32	0.32
Cheese (oz.)	0.21	0.21	0.21
Preserves (oz.)	0.14	0.14	0.14
Dried egg (oz.)	0.16	0.16	0.16
Liquid milk (pts)	-	-	-
Skim milk powder	0.12	0.12	0.12
Sausage meat (oz.)	0.67	0.67	0.67
Suet (oz.)	-	0.08	0.08

Source: NA, MAF 256/197.

Table 2. The regional pattern of British Restaurants and Civic Restaurants

	Population per catering establishment, 1940	Population per British Restaurant, 1941	Numbers of British Restaurants 1941	1943	Civic Restaurants, 1948
England					
Eastern I	308	14,659	37	56	22
Eastern II	228	16,061	45	83	25
London	237	13,736	364	501	212
Midlands	251	79,329	34	138	127
North Midlands	308	16,927	67	131	42
North	493	16,432	74	185	31
North East	334	23,335	105	176	64
North West	275	57,832	74	166	77
South	238	19,708	71	197	48
South East	185	8,794	127	112	42
South West	229	16,429	67	108	38
Wales					
North	171	160,000	1	8	4
South	336	22,932	33	84	15
Scotland					
East	331	36,000	5	16	2
North	278	-	0	1	1
North East	407	-	0	6	0
South East	380	30,000	15	21	6
West	537	231,425	8	46	17
N. Ireland	427	34,615	13	14	0
UK	280	20,910	1140	2043	773

Sources: NA, MAF 74/49; MAF 83/382; MAF 99/519; MAF 99/1589

Table 3. The nutritional content of British Restaurant meals in February 1943

	Standard	Actual
Energy	1000 k cals	626 k cals
Protein	24 g.	22 g.
Calcium	270 mg.	186 mg.
Iron	8 mg.	4-9 mg.
Vitamin A	200 i.u.	1000 i.u.
Vitamin B_1	200 i.u.	136 i.u.
Vitamin C	50 mg.	28-49 mg. (seasonal)
Riboflavin	0.9 mg.	0.3-0.9 mg.
Nicotinic acid	12 mg.	7 mg

Source: NA, MAF 256/197.

Table 4. British Restaurant supplies in relation to national stocks

	Estimated annual supply 1941-2 ('000 tons)	Requirements of British Restaurants as a proportion of the whole (per cent)
Butter, margarine	541	0.13
Cooking fats	241	0.20
Sugar	1,841	0.02
Tea	180	0.06
Preserves (jam, marmalade)	320	0.11
Bacon	385	0.19
Meat	1,610	0.24
Flour	5,356	0.08
Oatmeal	140	0.80
Beans, lentils, split peas	95	2.22
Rice	130	0.27
Sago and tapioca	17	1.38
Dried fruits	250	1.72

Source: NA, MAF 99/1705.

Notes

[1] London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), LCC/RC/GEN/1/1: E.A. Hartill, 13 January 1944.

[2] Although the LCC history remained in draft, the official war history did provide three volumes on food, authored by R.J. Hammond.

[3] Anon. 1942c, 675.

[4] Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2000; Vernon 2007.

[5] Gates 1942, 102; NA, MAF 99/1797: 'Ministry of Food, the Communal Restaurant: an Experiment', October 1940.

[6] The first approach was on 10 September, just after the first major air raids, with the formal letter following a week later. The Minister guaranteed that the Council would not be out of pocket as a result of this policy. LMA: LCC/RC/GEN/1/1.

[7] London County Council, Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee, 'The Londoners' Meals Service', 21 October 1940.

[8] Titmuss 1950, 346.

[9] LMA, LCC/RC/GEN/1/1: 'LCC, Meals Services, Origin of the Service, [1944]'

[10] NA, MAF 83/382; MAF 99/1796.

[11] National Archives, MAF 74/49: Ministry of Food, Public Relations Division, Information Branch, 'British Restaurants', 3 September 1943.

[12] Memo to Minister of Food, 21 March 1941. See Churchill 1950, 663.

[13] Bernstein 2003, 1137-8.

[14] Some sample documents have been preserved in the National Archives for Barrow-in-Furness and other places. See MAF 99/1684-6.

[15] Equipment was scheduled under 150 different headings, including solid fuel ranges, as well as electric and gas cookers; potato peeling machines; electric washing machines; refrigerators and insulated containers; sinks, scales, saucepans and furniture. National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[16] From May, 1941, Divisional Food Officers were given this power.

[17] For instance Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Hastings, Hull, Newcastle, Oxford and Wolverhampton.

[18] Food quality was a sensitive issue. Woolton was anxious for his staff to remember 'the Ministry's prestige was very closely associated with the efficiency of British restaurants [and] he was anxious that the quality of the service and other meals served should be maintained at a higher level'. NA, MAF 99/1716: memo by Mr Harwood, 27 October 1941.

[19] National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[20] NA, MAF 99/1734: City of Birmingham, Reconstruction Committee, 'British Restaurant Enquiry, September 11 to October 6, 1944'.

[21] Pyke 1944b, 231; National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[22] Jones 1944, 121-40; Ministry of Food 1946, 43-5.

[23] These were the result of deals done with the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[24] The Ministry began pressurising local authorities in 1940 but this ceased in 1943. NA, MAF 99/1759.

[25] NA, MAF 99/1589: Ministry of Food, 'Memorandum on British Restaurants', [1941].

[26] National Archives, MAF 74/49: Ministry of Food, Public Relations Division, Information Branch, 'British Restaurants', 3 September 1943.

[27] NA, MAF 99/1590-1594, monthly reports on British Restaurants to the War Cabinet.

[28] Hammond 1956, 390.

[29] NA, MAF 99/1589: Ministry of Food, 'Memorandum on British Restaurants', [1941].

[30] Ernest Burdett in Burdett, Morgan and Hodge, 1946, 515.

[31] Woolton 1959, 220. This was different from the decision made in Germany to deduct café meals from ration quotas. Anderson 1943, 27.

[32] A 1944 survey of the British Restaurants in Birmingham found that the vast majority of the 1530 people questioned were favourably disposed. NA, MAF 99/1734.

[33] NA, MAF 152/55.

[34] National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[35] Biddle 1942, 83.

[36] French 1943, Q.2855, made it clear that the Ministry considered the route of direct control: 'after all, we are a very large trading organization'.

[37] NA, MAF 99/1589: Ministry of Food, 'Memorandum on the Position of Community Feeding', January 1941.

[38] NA, MAF 99/1609.

[39] *Daily Telegraph* 29 December 1944.

[40] NA, MAF 99/1759: Memorandum, 'Establishment of British Restaurants', [1942].

[41] LMA, LCC/RC/GEN/1/26.

[42] Leopold 1989, 208.

[43] NA, MAF 99/1759: Memorandum, 'Establishment of British Restaurants', [1942].

[44] NA, MAF 99/1797.

[45] NA, MAF 99/1644: 'Catering Trade Crisis', letter from Incorporated Association of Purveyors of Light Refreshments, [February 1942].

[46] NA, MAF 99/137: 'Brief for the Minister', 21 May 1946.

[47] NA, MAF 152/55: 'Women's Voluntary Services, Association with Wartime Meals Activities', October 1943.

[48] See the *Meat Trades Journal* 15 May 1941; *The Times* 21 August 1941; *Caterer and Hotel Keeper* 5 September 1941, 5 and 12 September 1941, 9; *Liverpool Daily Post* 9 September 1941, 3; *Daily Mail* 23 September 1941; *Birmingham Mail* 3 October 1941.

[49] NA, MAF 99/1734: Ministry of Food, Wartime Meals Division, 'British Restaurants', October 1944.

[50] Hammond 1956, 397-8.

[51] *Hansard* 377, 28 January 1942, c.717.

[52] NA, MAF 99/1609.

[53] Sugden 1949.

[54] Box and Thomas 1944, 162.

[55] These data are at odds with a London survey in 1943, where the percentages were 24, 27, and 18 respectively. No doubt the longer commuting distances in the big city will have been a factor. London Council of Social Service 1943, 17.

[56] NA, MAF 99/1734: City of Birmingham, Reconstruction Committee, 'British Restaurant Enquiry, September 11 to October 6, 1944'.

[57] NA, MAF 99/1734: National Council of Social Service, Report of the Conference, 'The Future of Communal Restaurants', 7 February 1944.

[58] National Archives: MAF 74/49.

[59] They were said to be superior to those served in the restaurants of the Sorbonne, in Paris. *The Times* 22 February, 1947, 6f.

[60] Pyke 1944a, 92.

[61] *The Times* 2 July, 1942, 2a.

[62] LMA, LCC/RC/GEN/1/1: memo by M.C. Broatch, 3 September, 1943.

[63] National Archives: MAF 83/382, MAF 98/61.

[64] NA, MAF 256/197: 'The Nutritive Value of Communal Meals', 15 February 1943.

[65] Booth et al. 1942.

[66] *The Times* 22 August 1942, 5d.

[67] Summerfield 1983; Jackson 1992, 160.

[68] Each main meal in the catering sector was allocated 1d worth of meat and, in calculating total consumption, the ration for domestic consumption could be added.

[69] NA, MAF 83/382: Committee on Catering Establishments.

[70] *Hansard* 383, 22 October 1942, c.2121.

[71] NA, MAF 99/1734.

[72] Box and Thomas 1944, 162.