

Children

Children collecting blackberries



Read this article to learn about why children collected blackberries during the First World War.

In 1918 [rationing](#) was introduced to Britain. [German U-Boats](#) were sinking ships carrying food to Britain and there was a danger that the country may begin to starve.

A government committee was set up to look at the ways of using any available natural resources.

Throughout the country, rural schools were instructed to 'employ their children in gathering blackberries during school hours' for the Government jam making scheme.

The children of Willingdon School rose to the challenge and supervised by their teachers groups went out into the fields from 9 September to 23 October; to harvest what was obviously a bumper crop. The School Log records 17 days when the



children were taken out blackberry picking. The first afternoon 9th Sept - *'No school this afternoon, the children gathered 73 lbs of blackberries for jam for the Ford Committee.'*

The fruit was packed into specially provided baskets of a regulation size and sent immediately by train to special factories where it was made into blackberry and apple jam for soldiers. Mr Haylock, headmaster, records the amazing weight of 1,869 lbs 3oz being sent from the school. In return, cheques were sent to the teachers who were authorised to pay the pupils.

On 28th October Mr Haylock records receiving a cheque for £23.7.6d in payment, which is worth over £1400 in today's money. He shared out the money to the 123 children on the school roll.

Questions

- 1) Why was food running short during the war?
- 2) How many lbs of blackberries did Willingdon children collect?
- 3) How much money did the children make?





Images



Figure 1: Willingdon Village School. Image courtesy of Rosalind Hodge



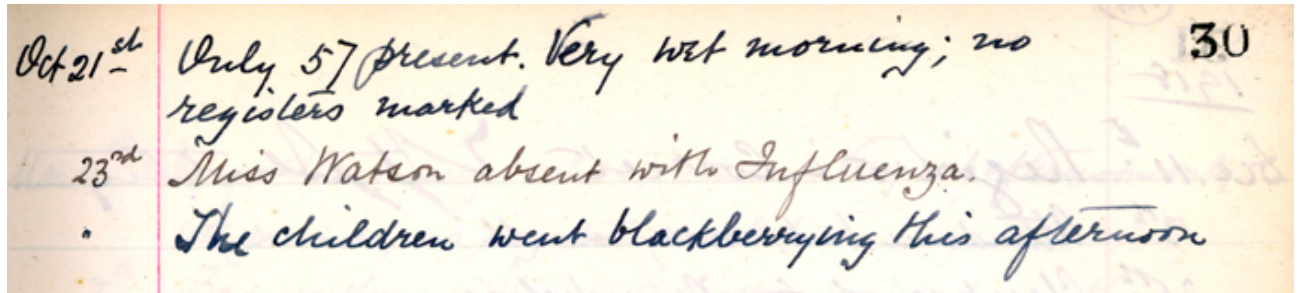


Figure 2: Log book entry 1 blackberries. Image courtesy of Rosalind Hodges.





Oct 28th The children gathered 1869 lbs 3 oz of blackberries.
I received a cheque for £23.7.6 which I
paid out to the gatherers

Figure 3: Log book entry 2 blackberries. Image courtesy of Rosalind Hodges.

