

Wartime

Although the phoney war had ended, it wasn't until September 1940, when Hitler's **Luftwaffe** dropped the first bombs on London, that British people really felt the conflict.

The **Blitz** means 'lightning'. It was designed to destroy cities and break people's morale.

To keep Britain's most vulnerable people safe, the government evacuated children, teachers, new mothers and pregnant women to the countryside.

Meanwhile, food ships were being sunk by German torpedoes, so the government imposed rationing to make sure everyone had a fair share.

It worked so well that many people were healthier than before - there were fewer pregnancy deaths and some kids were fitter.

But during the **Blitz**, life was by no means easy.

Most of Britain's young men had been conscripted, so by the end of 1940 women had stepped up to work alongside men - cracking the enigma code, working in factories and driving buses and trams.

But they still got paid 25 per cent less than men for the same work.

During all of this upheaval the government knew that Britain had a secret weapon.

Morale. The **Blitz** spirit.

Winston Churchill knew that high morale was vital to help Britain get through the war. So he penned rousing speeches.

And the government used censorship and broadcasted positive propaganda in the form of chirpy tunes and comedy characters, such as Doctor Carrot and Potato Pete from the Dig for Victory campaign, which made war seem like an opportunity for communities to unite, and censored out the grisly details.

So the Second World War was a tough time for Britain, but good organisation, community spirit and strong willpower really helped take the bite out of things.