
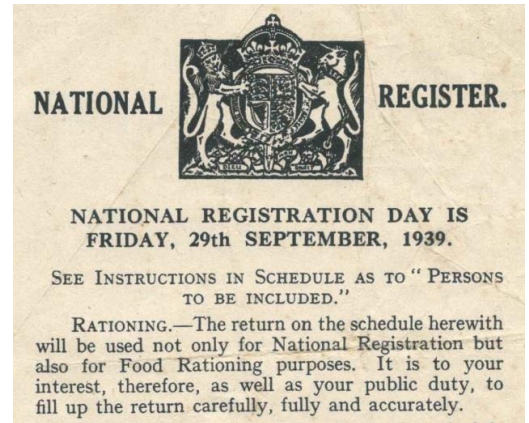
	VENTNOR & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY	
National Registration Day 29 September 1939		

29 September 1939, eighty years ago on Sunday, was National Registration Day in Ventnor and across the UK; the Government needed to produce a register of the population to help plan the war effort, and particularly food rationing, so needed to collect the details of every household. The little girl here is Celia Heasman, aged 3. She lived with her parents in the flat above the International Stores at 69 Ventnor High Street, and needed to be included and given her own National Registration identity card, although she was only one year old in 1939.



Collecting the necessary information from the population was a huge task, which all had to be done on paper, and face to face. At that time the BBC was central to communicating with the nation, and the Registrar General broadcast a message on the evening of the 29 September at 6.30 pm explaining in what can best be described as a fatherly tone exactly what each household needed to do:

Tonight is National Registration Night . . . If by tonight you have not received a schedule [registration form], either owing to some rare accident or because the enumerator had been quite unable to find anyone at home to receive it, you should get busy yourself. The enumerator has probably done his best to find you. I have had reports of cases where the enumerator has called eight times without success. He can hardly do more; and as your Ration Book depends upon your return you should look out for him and get into touch with him. . . .

Most people know the year in which they were born. But if you are one of those who are not very certain about it, you must know your age; and here is a simple rule for converting your age into your birth year. Consider how old you will be at the end of this year, and then subtract your age from 1939. For example, if are now 35 and will still be 35 at the end of the year, subtract 35 from 1939. The result, 1904, will be your birth year. I hope that nobody will be coy about their date of birth. . . .




The enumerator who delivered your schedule will return to collect it and to issue Identity Cards for your household. When the enumerator calls, ask him in and let him do his writing at a desk or table. You want your Identity Cards properly written and you can hardly expect him to write them properly on the doorstep, particularly in the evening under blackout conditions. . . The Ration Books may not be posted for some weeks. If you remove [move house] before receiving a Ration Book you cannot expect it to follow you about like a pet lamb. You must leave the new address behind and arrange privately to have the Ration Book forwarded. We have done our best to make things as easy as possible; if you follow the advice I have given, everything should go smoothly. Good night and good luck.

Celia Heasman's father Leslie was the manager of the International Stores in Ventnor, and Celia was born in the flat above the shop. She remembers being spoilt by the customers when her mother Edith was working behind the counter. In September 1942 the shop and flat were destroyed by a bomb one night; fortunately the family were safe because that night Edith and Celia were staying with a family on the Esplanade, and Leslie was on duty fire watching. They were able to arrange a move to Wiltshire where Leslie managed the International Stores in Trowbridge - Celia's Registration Card on the right being duly amended as shown in the second picture.

The 1939 Register was a considerable achievement, and once the war was over, it was used as the foundation for the Central Register of the NHS.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION		
EPHG	10	3.
<i>Heasman born Feb. 19/1938</i>		
<i>Celia. S.</i>		
DO NOTHING WITH THIS PART UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD		
Postal Address of Above Person :-		
<i>69 High St</i>		
<i>Ventnor</i>		
(Parent) <i>L. A. HEASMAN</i>		
(Signed) <i>Celia L. Heasman</i>		
Date <i>May 21 1940</i>		

NATIONAL REGISTRATION		
EPHG	10	3.
<i>Heasman born Feb. 19/1938</i>		
<i>Celia. S.</i>		
DO NOTHING WITH THIS PART UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD		
Registered Address of Above Person		
<i>Coniston Square</i>		
TROWBRIDGE		
DATE & OFFICIAL STAMP		
		
Date <i>May 21 1940</i>		

Lesley Telford, [Ventnor & District Local History Society](http://www.ventnorhistory.com), using information and records from our Collection. Extracts taken from the script of the Registrar General's broadcast held in the National Archives.