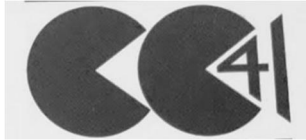


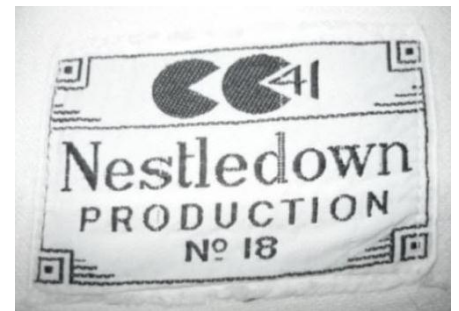
Remembering CC41

CC41, standing originally for civilian clothing approved by the wartime government from 1941, became a familiar sight not only on clothing but also on other textiles, shoes and furniture as the war progressed and most items were regulated and rationed. The symbol, known as 'the cheeses', showed that, although the goods were 'utility' standard, they met specified criteria guaranteeing quality.



The Utility Scheme aimed to reduce civilian consumption of raw materials and enable 367,000 garment workers to switch to producing armaments. The Scheme approved specific fabrics and garment design, both stamped with the CC41 symbol. It also standardised sizes and the amount of fabric to be used for each garment. The numbers of pleats, pockets and button holes were stipulated as was the width of seams and hems. Nevertheless, women's basic outfits were well-designed, including suits with blouses, afternoon dresses, coats and cotton overall dresses for office workers. People, and there were many, who made their own clothes could use Utility patterns or adapt old clothing using, for example, men's suits to make a skirt and jacket or a coat to make a pinafore dress. Clothing coupons were introduced in June 1941 to make sure limited resources were distributed fairly and to enable each person to have enough coupons to buy a new outfit each year. Adults initially received 66 clothing coupons, an amount which was steadily reduced down to 36 coupons in 1945. At the same time the government altered the amount of coupons for each item according to available resources. In 1941 the initial coupon requirements were, for example, 16 for a man's overcoat, 5 for a shirt or blouse, 3 for socks and 2 for stockings. Clothes rationing finally ended in 1949. More information can be found in S. Griffith, *Stitching for Victory*, The History Press, 2009. To see illustrations of clothes and shoes with CC41 labels visit museum websites such as <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>.

The Nestledown label (right) was sewn on a flannelette sheet - people were allowed to purchase only three sheets per bed, along with a mattress and two blankets. As the sheets became worn it was customary to 'make do and mend' either by turning a sheet's sides to middle or patching one sheet with pieces from another old sheet or making the less worn part of the sheet into a pillow case. After the wartime regulations were eventually lifted, the patched sheets could be replaced. Some people did not throw their old mended sheets away but used them as dust sheets, some surviving in Tickhill to the present day - a testimony to thrift and the durability of the sheets.



Within two days of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, the government introduced timber controls affecting the furniture industry. By July 1940 timber supplies were withdrawn completely but, following bombing raids, limited supplies of timber were made available to manufacturers so that people could replace basic furniture destroyed in the bombing. The 'Standard Emergency Furniture' scheme using 80% plywood in each item began in February 1941. In November 1941 the Ministry of Supply decreed that only 20 types of essential furniture could be made. Discussions during 1942 led to the introduction of the Utility Scheme, where furniture had to be strong and serviceable using oak or mahogany, and the publication of a catalogue of approved designs in January 1943. This furniture was stamped with the CC41 symbol. Supply restrictions still applied: only people who were bombed out or newly-wed could obtain permits to buy furniture. Each permit had 60 units - 8 were needed for a wardrobe and 1 for a chair, for example. A second Utility Scheme catalogue was issued in 1947. The Scheme finally ended in January 1953. Has any of this Utility furniture survived in Tickhill? For more information see a catalogue from an exhibition at the Geffrye Museum: R. Sword, *CC41 Utility Furniture and Fashion 1941-1951*, ILEA, 1974.

The illustrations below are taken from the 1943 Utility Furniture Catalogue.

