



DISS EXPRESS - Friday, June 12 1998



Wartime songs and memories for ex-land army girls

THERE was singing and dancing at Gissing Village Hall when more than 30 ex land army ladies met up for their annual reunion on Saturday. The ex land army ladies are women who worked on the land while the men went off to fight in World War II. Every year the women who worked on land in Norfolk and Suffolk meet up and

for over ten years Bunny Snelling, who lives in Tivetshall, has been organising it. This year they all sat down for a buffet lunch and afterwards gathered round the organ to sing wartime songs together. There was also some dancing. Bunny said: "It was lovely to sing all

the old songs together." Unfortunately it will be the last time Bunny, who is 82, will be able to organise the event because she has lots of other commitments. Now a lady from Hemphall has said she might be able to take on the annual reunion but the event would have to move from Gissing.

Tel:
Writtle 313

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY
Essex County Committee,
The Priory,
Writtle,
Cholmsford.
16th April, 1947.

Dear Miss Hayne,

This is to tell you that you are granted a Willing Release from the Women's Land Army with effect from 19th April, 1947, and a Release Certificate is enclosed.

I want you to know that your hard work while a member of the Land Army has been very valuable to the cause of Food Production and I would like to thank you for all that you have done.

Will you please return all your uniform to Purcell Cole, Writtle, Mr. Cholmsford in a clean and laundered condition (even if in bad condition it must be returned for salvage), together with ~~the uniform~~, gunboots and towels, with the exception of one shirt and one pair of shoes and one overcoat, which you may retain. Please be sure to put your name and number inside the parcel (if married please quote your maiden name as well as the married name.) If, however, you are likely to continue with part-time land work and wish to buy any of the following items, will you kindly fill in and return the attached slip together with a postal order:- Breecchos, Overall Coats, Boots, Leggings, Gunboots. All other uniform except the shirt, shoes and overcoat already mentioned, must be returned as any coupon bonus due to you will not be sent until this is done.

Will you please sign and return the attached receipt for the free uniform you retain.

Yours sincerely,

pp Wakefield Smith
County Secretary.

I understand I must

Breecchos.

Overall Coat



WOMEN'S LAND ARMY (ENGLAND & WALES).
RELEASE CERTIFICATE.

The Women's Land Army for England and Wales acknowledges with appreciation the services given by

Ad

Miss M.L. Hayne

who has been an enrolled member for the period from

30th March, 1943 to 19th April, 1947.

and has this day been granted a willing release.

Date 16/4/47.

pp Wakefield Smith
WOMEN'S LAND ARMY.

Miss M.L. Hayne,
21, The Heath,
Elmstead.

When you have returned your uniform you will receive your bonus issue of coupons.

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY,
Essex County Committee,
Essex Institute of Agriculture,
WRITTELE, Chelmsford.

23 March
..... 1943.

Dear Madam,

In answer to your letter of the 11th inst. on the subject of your possible enrolment in the Women's Land Army, I have pleasure in giving you overleaf a brief outline of the conditions of service in the Land Army. If, after reading this, you feel that work on the land is the form of National Service to which you are best suited, will you be good enough to complete the enclosed Form of Enrolment and take it with you to your interview.

All applicants for enrolment are interviewed by representatives of the Women's Land Army and if considered suitable for service on the land, are accepted and formally enrolled. I should be glad if you would arrange to attend for interview at:-

CENTRE.

Bishop's Stortford.

Braintree.

Chelmsford.

Colchester.

Dagenham.

Ilford.

Romford.

Rayleigh.

London.

DAY & HOUR.

Thursday.
1.30.-2.30.

Wednesday.
2.0. - 4.0.

Wednesday.
2.0. - 4.0.

Tuesday.
3.0. - 5.0.

Tuesday.
10.30.-12.0.

Tuesday.
1.0.-3.30.

Thursdays.
3.0. - 4.30.

Friday.
2.30.-4.30.

on
11.0.-3.0.

ADDRESS.

W.V.S. Headquarters,
12, Market Square.

Labour Exchange,
82, High Street.

Institute of Agriculture
Writtle.

U.D.C. Offices,
Rebow Chambers
St. Isaac's Walk.

167, Broad Street.

Labour Exchange,
Methodist Church Hall,
Seven Kings.

W.V.S. Office,
Market Place.

Labour Exchange,
London Hill.

421, Keysign House,
Oxford Street,
London, W.1.

PRIVATE R. D. WINGRAVE—MISS J. M. EMENEY

Members of the Women's Land Army formed a guard of honour outside the Elmstead Methodist Church on Saturday, when their colleague Miss Joan May Emenev, younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Emenev of Elmstead Heath, married Private Reginald Donald Wingrave, youngest son of Aircraftman and Mrs. Charles Wingrave of Romford.

Given away by her father, the bride was charmingly attired in an ankle length gown of white satin with a veil and headdress of orange blossom, which was kindly lent by a friend. She wore white shoes and carried a bouquet of red carnations.

The bride's only sister, Mrs. R. A. Parker was matron-of-honour. She wore a gown of pale green lace over taffeta with a headdress to match and carried a posy of grape hyacinths. Her butterfly brooch was the gift of the bridegroom.

Master Richard Emenev, nephew of the bride, was the little page and he looked

a dashing figure in a miniature sailor suit.

The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Joseph Pearce of Brightlingsea and the best man was a friend of the bridegroom who is serving in the same unit as himself. The hymn "Lead us, Heavenly Father lead us" was sung and Mrs. Cox, the organist, also played the delightful ballad "I'll Walk Beside You."

The church was prettily decorated. As the happy couple left the church they were greeted by the guard of honour composed of members of the Women's Land Army in which the bride is serving. Three horseshoes were given to the bride, including one which was presented by the little page.

A reception was afterwards held at the "Rose and Crown" and 46 guests attended. Many useful gifts were received. Later Private and Mrs. Wingrave set out on their honeymoon which is being spent at Woodbridge, Suffolk. The bride travelled in a tweed costume with accessories to tone. Her brown leather handbag was the bridegroom's gift.

Sunshine For Local Brides



WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

Institute of Agriculture,

Essex County Committee

BS.

Writtle, Chelmsford.

Writtle 274.

20th April, 1943.

My.

little.

The Essex Institute of Agriculture,
WRITTLE, Chelmsford, Essex.

20/4/43.

Dear Miss Hayne,

Your land army papers are now complete and I understand you are working for the War Agricultural Committee who wish to keep you in their service.

I am therefore formally ratifying your appointment as from today, 20th April.

I enclose you Wages Sheet, etc.

Yours sincerely,

pp. N. E. Solly Flood
Organising Secretary,
(Mrs. Solly-Flood)

Miss M.L. Hayne,
21 The Heath,
Elmstead,
nr. Colchester, Ex.

of Essex as a member of the Women's
I welcome you very warmly and wish you
ags.

as is Mrs. Byrom

who will keep in touch
portable. We now have a District Representative
always be someone quite close as
tative is Lady Ada

stitute to see or write to either your
if you need help or advice of any kind.

gely Society or the Hospitals Contributory
so at once. The weekly contributions to
it valued help if you should be ill.

to the private employees of the farmer for
by him and may be dismissed by him. They
oyces: BUT the Land Army asks its members
to once when they contemplate changing jobs.
to the County Secretary, is possible before-

merely a working one and you are not obliged
you will. When not wearing uniform will
number is the best publicity for the Land Army.

you wear your uniform

Your initial issue of uniform will be:-

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 pair breeches. | Supplementary |
| 1 woollen pullover. | Issue after one |
| 3 prs. stockings. | month's service. |
| 2 prs. slipper socks. | 1 pr. breeches. |
| (where gumboots are | 3 prs. stockings. |

- 1 Essex 8.
3 WOMEN'S LAND ARMY.
2 Essex County Committee.

- 1 Institute of Agriculture,
WRITTLE, Chelmsford.
2 April 21st 1943.

- 1 Dear Miss Hayne,

Your papers are now complete and
your Land Army number is 16554. Please
quote this number when writing to the
office.

I enclose herewith your badge and
shall be glad if you will sign the
attached receipt and return it to me
without delay.

Yours sincerely,

pp. N. E. Solly Flood
Organising Secretary,
(Mrs. Solly-Flood).

Replacement of Uniform after 12

- Months on receipt of coupons.
1 pr. breeches.
1 woollen pullover.
1 pr. shoes or boots.
2 prs. slipper socks, if gumboots
are issued.
2 prs. dungarees)
1 Overall coat) or
2 overall Coats &
1 pr. Dungarees.
1 Hat.
2 Shirts.
6 prs. stockings.
1 pr. gumboots or substitute
boots with leggings.

P.T.O.



WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

Institute of Agriculture,

Essex County Committee

BS.

Writtle, Chelmsford.

Writtle 274.

20th April, 1943.

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Miss M.L. Hayne,
21 The Heath,
Elmstead,
nr. Colchester, Ex.

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I welcome you very warmly and wish you
ags.

sa is Mrs. Byrom

who will keep in touch
Portable. We now have a District Representative
always be someone quite close to act as
tative is Lady Ad. Meeld

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if you need help or advice of any kind.

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marily a working one and you are not obliged
you will. When not wearing uniform will
number is the best publicity for the Land Army.

you wear your

Your initial issue of uniform will be:-

1 pair brooches. Supplementary
1 wollen pullover. Issue after one
3 prs. stockings. month's service.
2 prs. slipper socks. 1 pr. brooches.
(where gumboots are 3 prs. stockings.

1 Essex 8.
3 WOMEN'S LAND ARMY.
2 Essex County Committee.
1 Institute of Agriculture,
1 WRITTLE, Chelmsford.
2 April 21st 1943.

1 Dear Miss Hayne,

Your papers are now complete and
your Land Army number is 116554. Please
quote this number when writing to the
office.

I enclose herewith your badge and
shall be glad if you will sign the
attached receipt and return it to me
without delay.

Yours sincerely,

pp. n. E. Solly-Flood
Organising Secretary,
(Mrs. Solly-Flood).

Replacement of Uniform after 12

months on receipt of coupons.

1 pr. brooches.

1 wollen pullover.

1 pr. shoes or boots.

2 prs. slipper socks, if gumboots
are issued.

2 prs. dungarees)

1 Overall coat) or

2 overall Coats &

1 pr. Dungarees.

1 Hat.

2 Shirts.

6 prs. stockings.

1 pr. gumboots or substitute
boots with leggings.

P.T.O.



By this personal message I wish to express to you

MISS M.L. HAYNE

*my appreciation of your loyal and devoted service
as a member of the Women's Land Army from*

30th March, 1943 to 19th April, 1947.

*Your unsparing efforts at a time when the victory
of our cause depended on the utmost use of the
resources of our land have earned for you the
country's gratitude.*

Elizabeth R

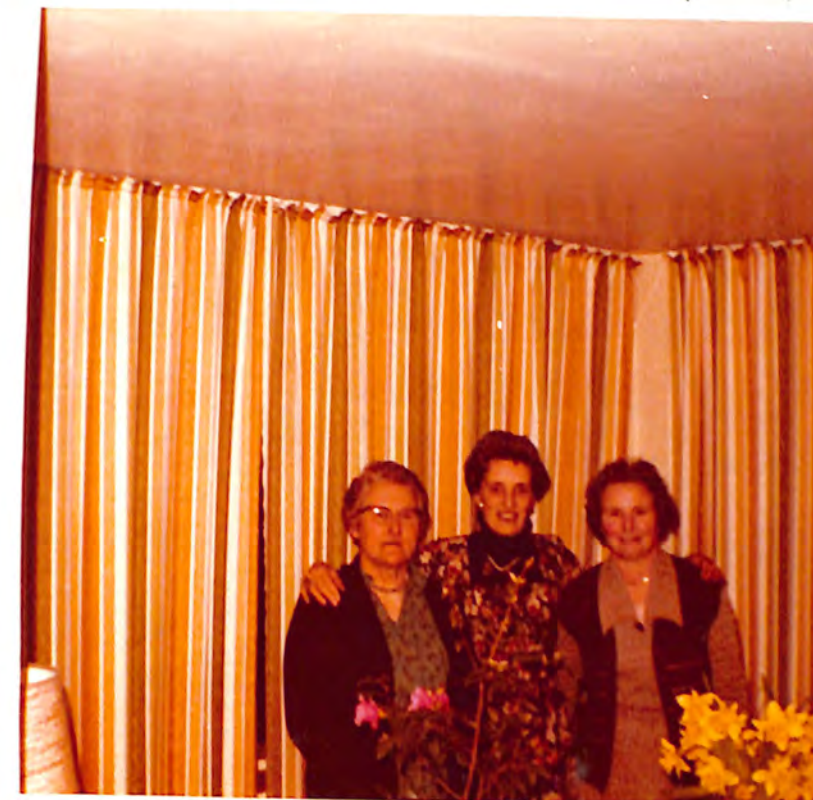


Women's Land Army reunion

Sir — Thirty-five years ago in October, 1943, 75,900 land girls were employed in England and Wales, and 1643 of these volunteers worked in Norfolk.

If any of your readers were amongst these girls they may be interested to know that a WLA East of England reunion will be held in St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, on Saturday, March 10th, 1979, and if they write to me, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, I will be pleased to let them have details.

— Yours faithfully,
(Mrs.) FRIEDA FEETHAM.
1, Denton Road,
Norwich.



ATS Land Army Timbers Cup Girls
Linking together for Great Rally
Re-union

4th June 1981 "Bellon House"
Lord Brownlow's Estate
4 teas ordered
by Mrs Mary Ashbolt

No 4



LINDA
ASHBOLT

12.0 Stereo
The Lunchtime
Show

with KEITH SKIPPER
Phone-ins and consumer
advice, a recipe and
Pub-of-the-Week.

Radio Norfolk.
9th September 1981.
W L A.

REMEMBER

**HARVEST
HOME**

with the
LAND GIRLS

GRESSENHALL
September 27th, 1981

No 023

*Women's Land Army
Reunion*

SUNDAY 27th SEPT. 1981

1p.m. to 6p.m.

**RURAL LIFE MUSEUM
GRESSENHALL
NR. DEREHAM, NORFOLK**



0379-3132

BYE TOWN HALL
SAT. OCTOBER 13th. 1984
1p.m. for 1-30p.m. LUNCH

*His bands welcome
or
Friends*





W L A. reunion 1984.

1985

W L A. reunion October 5th 1985.





EYE TOWN HALL
on **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 1985**



5

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY REUNION

Norfolk College of Agriculture and Horticulture,
Easton, Nr. Norwich, NR9 5DX.

11 a. m. - 5 p. m. Saturday 27th September, 1986.

College Principal Mr. D. N. Crowe, BSc., FRAGS., has kindly invited ex-W. I. A./Timber Corps volunteers to hold a reunion at the Norfolk College of Agriculture and Horticulture, (adjoining the Royal Norfolk Showground on the A47).

Programme

11. 00 a. m. - 12. 25 p. m. Members will be able to look around the College grounds.
12. 30 p. m. - 01. 55 p. m. Lunch (please bring your own packed lunch) and mardle time.
Drinks will be available at the Bar.
02. 00 p. m. - 02. 25 p. m. Introduction and welcome by Principal Mr. D. N. Crowe, BSc., FRAGS.
02. 30 p. m. - 03. 55 p. m. "The Women's Land Army" - sketches by the Hethersett Back to the Land team.
04. 00 p. m. - 05. 00 p. m. Notices.
Tea and biscuits.

If there is sufficient demand for transport from in and around Norwich, a bus service will be arranged; further information can be obtained by enclosing a stamped self addressed envelope when applying for tickets, details will then be sent advising if transport has been booked, and if so, the fare and timetable.

To obtain reunion tickets please complete the form below and return to -

Mrs Frieda Feetham, "Halloween" Church Hill, Lower Tasburgh, NR15 1NB.
Telephone: Tivetshall (037 977) 261.

Nº . 013

**Women's
Land Army Reunion**

Saturday, 27th September, 1986

11a.m. to 5p.m.

at the Norfolk College of Agriculture
and Horticulture

Easton, NR9 5DX, Norfolk

Ticket £2



W.L.A. reunion at Tiverton
average house. 25th April 1987
Sue Sturgeon W.L.A. Eden
with Dick Joyce.

LINDA ASHBOLT



1986

We'll meet again



● Practical uniforms were the trademark of the Land Army who kept the Home Front going in the last war.

Wartime memories for the Land Army girls

WHEN Land Army girls plan a reunion they don't mind travelling for miles to renew old friendships.

So it was no wonder guests came from as far afield as Liverpool and Essex for the fourth annual get together at Eye Town Hall.

Organiser Ivy White from Palgrave, one of the many women who came to East Anglia during the war years to help out on the farms, was pleased to see so many gathered under one roof again. This year there were a total of 70 including husbands, who sat down

to dine and enjoy a traditional entertainment of popular melodies from the 1940s.

Ivy's two grandsons Iain and Barrie Sturgeon played their cornets while a trio led by Pat Siano, a Land girl from Norwich joined in with accordions and bass.

Some of the group came dressed for the part, in the uniform which they wore during their service in the years 1940-1953. None were true originals however, for Ivy says they had to hand uniforms back when they were demobbed.



● The Land Army girls crowd into Eye Town Hall for their annual reunion.

EX WOMANS LAND ARMY

LUNCH AND GET TOGETHER 1987
AT

PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL on

SATURDAY, 10th OCTOBER at 12.30 for 1 o'clock

ADMISSION *f5*

Please reply by 26th September to: Mrs I White
c/o Mrs G Sturgeon
26 Champneys Road
Diss Norfolk.

TICKETS LIMITED *MEN WELCOME*

PLEASE ENCLOSE STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

Heartache when music



Pat Siano pictured at her home yesterday with her accordion.

East Anglian Daily Times, Monday, October 12, 1987

Land Army girls Palgrave reunion



Former Land Army girls celebrate at their reunion at Palgrave. Left to right, they are organiser Mrs. Ivy White, Mrs. Edna Fuller and Miss Brenda Walker.

SEVENTY-five former Land Army girls gathered at Palgrave, near Diss, at the weekend for their fifth annual reunion.

The "girls", who worked on farms during the 1939-45 War, came from all over East Anglia to attend the event, which was organised by Mrs. Ivy White.

Mrs. White, a Lancashire lady, who worked on north

Suffolk farms during the war, lives in Maltings Close, Diss.

She said, "We all had a marvellous time."

Her daughter, Mrs. Greta Sturgeon, baked a cake to mark the 74th birthday of one of the women present and grandsons, Iain, 13, and Barrie, 12, played cornets as part of the musical entertainment.

1987



FARMING AND COUNTRY SCENE



By Michael Pollitt, agricultural editor

Revival of proud old skill

FARMER Bill Bird is reviving harvesting methods of the past in his bid to find an alternative to cereal crops.

This year, he set aside five acres for thatching straw to sell to counties in the south and planned to harvest it the old fashioned way with binder and steam thresher.

Mr Bird, from Tunstead, said: "They keep telling us there's a glut of grain so we were hoping to expand into thatching straw. They use quite a lot of straw for thatching in the south — and some in Suffolk — and they can't get hold of it."

Market

Thatching straw needs to be as long as possible, it must be harvested early — sometimes when it is almost green — and this cannot be done with a modern combine which bruises the straw.

But finding the necessary tools for the job is no problem for Mr Bird because he is the proud owner of a steam thresher and traditional binder which he has lovingly restored with friend Mervyn York.

They are staging a charity event, called "The Tunstead Trosh" next month when the immaculate machinery from a bygone age can be seen in action threshing some of the straw he has grown.

But the weather has not just hit the modern farmers — soon after the binder had cut the corn four inches of rain fell spoiling his straw thatching crop, but there will still be plenty for the "trosh" on Sunday, October 11.

Mr Bird had found a ready market for his straw. "I had someone who rang me up and wanted to buy it. I had to tell him it was not good enough quality. It's just that there's been a terrible summer. If the rain had only held off for another three or four days we may have been able to cart the straw."

"Hopefully we'll have better luck next year," said Mr Bird.

Opportunity

The Tunstead Trosh is being held in Market Street, Tunstead, from 10 am until 5 pm. Admission and parking are free. There will be a car boot sale, stalls and refreshments plus a reunion of Land Army Girls. Proceeds from the event will go to the John Groom Appeal to raise cash for flats for the disabled in Norwich.



Harvesting the old fashioned way. Mervyn York (left) and Alfred Benson with the binder that cut the corn on Bill Bird's field at Hall Farm, Tunstead earlier this summer.



The Twestad Trash Sunday Oct 11th 1987





1987



Land Army on parade

THE Women's Land Army were on parade in Dereham on Saturday afternoon.

Over 25 former members of the WLA, most wearing their uniforms, were at Chambers bookshop to support their former "boss" Miss Iris Tillet, who was launching her new book, *The Cinderella Army*.

The book tells the story of the Norfolk WLA during the second world war and while Iris, who had come from her home in Scotland for the occasion, was busy signing copies of her book the "girls" swapped yarns; some had not met for many years.

The afternoon ended with a photo session and then tea.

The Cinderella Army is available from booksellers and newsagents price £2.95.

History action a great success

NORFOLK'S first History Fair attracted an amazing 10,000 or more visitors at the weekend.

The EDP-sponsored event has been hailed as a resounding success by organisers and the public alike.

The two-day fair at the county's Rural Life Museum at Gressenhall, near Dereham, is the first of its kind but organiser Bridget Yates said they were hoping to make it a regular event every two years.

She said the amount of work it took to attract the numerous exhibitors and ensure smooth organisation could only be tackled every two years.

"We are really pleased with its

Pictures by Sarah Hunt

success. Everything went fine, despite the weather. Mostly, people came in family parties and enjoyed themselves," she said.

"Everyone put a lot of effort into their stands. They have really done us proud."

The idea of the fair was to dispel the rather dusty image of history as a dull subject.

Norfolk's history from prehistoric times to the present day was on display.

All aspects of life were tackled, from war to peace.

There was a colourful Viking encampment disrupted by noisy marauders and drama from groups

throughout Norfolk.

Traditional Punch and Judy shows were a great crowd-puller and more than 70 stands provided interest for all ages.

Heavy horses from Stanfield gave a demonstration of their work in the fields and rare breeds captured the attention of delighted children.

The Norfolk Shire Horse Centre at West Runton and the East Anglian Rare Breeds Survival Trust were two of the organisations represented.

Money raised at the event, designed to bring history to more than just the experts, will go to the Friends of Gressenhall Museum and the Federation of Local Historical and Archaeological Organisations.

Mrs Linda Ashbolt

THE NORFOLK RURAL MUSEUM

OPEN DAY

25th Sept 1988

WROXHAM & HOVETON LIONS
TUNSTEAD TROSH
AND

CAR BOOT SALE

Sunday, October 9th⁸⁸

**MARKET STREET
TUNSTEAD**

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Stalls and Refreshments
Reunion of Land Army Girls

FREE ADMISSION — FREE PARKING

CAR BOOT £3 per pitch

Proceeds to Cystic Fibrosis and other
local charities



May 14 1988
 WLA
 session at
 Gillingham Village
 Hall
 Bunting arranged

Memoirs of a Land Army girl

THE GREAT grand-daughter of the first editor of the Eastern Daily Press has written her first book at the age of 76.

Iris Tillett, a member of a renowned Norfolk family, has recalled from memory her experiences with the Women's Land Army in Norfolk during the second world war in a 32-page book called "The Cinderella Army".

It is almost exactly 50 years since Miss Tillett was invited to become county secretary of the newly-created Women's Land Army, which supported farmers who were short of labour and under pressure to produce more food.

She was prompted to write the book after being featured in a television programme about the WLA. All Norfolk records have been destroyed and many of the women who joined are no longer alive.

The book is being launched at Dereham on September 3 when Miss Tillett and other ex-WLA members will put on their uniforms to sign copies at Chambers Bookshop.

Miss Tillett, who moved to Dumfries in Scotland in 1979 to be closer to members of her family, said she was relieved to have completed the book.

"As much as anything, this was writing a record of something that ought to be written down and I seemed to be the only person left to do it," she said.

Dereham was a good location to launch the book because she was at nearby Hoe when war was declared and listened to the announcement on a smallholder's radio.

Miss Tillett said the incidents which were most clear in her mind were watching bombs drop over Norwich and meeting the children of the Duke of Kent at Sandringham just after their father had been killed in a flying accident and before they had been told of the tragedy.

In her book, she recalls that the WLA girls became quite clever at finding their way around the county without the signposts, which had been removed at the threat of an invasion.

However, on one occasion a member drove on to a new airfield by mistake while lost in fog and managed to get off again without being spotted.

Miss Tillett's family are well remembered in Norwich. Jacob Henry Tillett was an MP and the first editor of the EDP. Her uncle, Louis, was also a Norwich MP and her brother, Norman, is a former Lord Mayor of Norwich.

The book is being published by Jim Baldwin Publishing, of Fakenham, and is priced at £2.95.

Eastern Daily Press, Monday, August 22, 1988



EX WOMENS LAND ARMY REUNION LUNCH & TREE PLANTING

AT PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

ON SATURDAY 22nd OCTOBER 1988

LUNCH 12.30 ^{for 1pm}
A SHORT PARADE LED BY GISLINGHAM SILVER BAND
WILL PRECEDE THE TREE PLANTING AT 3.30pm
AFTERWARDS THE BAND WILL ENTERTAIN.

TICKETS

£5-50 NUMBERS LIMITED TO 80

APPLY MRS I. WHITE 3 MALTINGS CLOSE, DISS NORFOLK IP223YH

S.A.E. PLEASE BY OCTOBER 1st

'Thanks' to everyone who helped



The Gislingham Brass Band leads the march through the village of Palgrave to mark the annual reunion of the Land Army.

'Land Girls' return to see old friends

MORE THAN 60 former "land girls" from all over East Anglia met in Suffolk at the weekend to renew friendships and talk about old times.

The "girls", now in their 60s and 70s, marched through the village of Palgrave, near Diss, to plant a tree, attend a reunion tea and be entertained.

They were former members of the Women's Land Army which kept many East Anglian farms going during the Second World War.

Organiser of the reunion was Mrs. Ivy White, a former Land Army girl who now lives in Palgrave.

Mrs. White, 64, said, "We are planting a tree as a thank-you to the farmers and everyone else who we worked with during the war."

She added, "Not all the farmers welcomed us with open arms. They didn't want girls on their land because they didn't think we could do the work."

"We soon proved we could do it and in some jobs, like milking, we could do it better than the men."

Hard work

Mrs. White, a native of Cheshire, came to work on farms in Suffolk after being conscripted, along with many other young women, to the Land Army.

"It was hard work, especially when you had to pull sugar beet, but I thoroughly enjoyed those years," she said.

The march through Palgrave was accompanied by the Gislingham Silver Band which also provided the entertainment after the tea in the local community centre.

Mrs. White's daughter, Mrs. Greta Sturgeon, is the only female member of the long-established band, playing the baritone.

Mrs. Sturgeon's sons, Barrie and Iain, are also members of the band. They play cornets.

A cake made for the reunion was decorated by a tree, marking the planting ceremony which had taken place outside.

East Anglian Daily Times, Monday, October 24,

Monday, October 24, 1988



Capturing some of the happy moments at the reunion meeting at Palgrave Community Centre.



A time to relive old memories for Suffolk's former "land girls". Full story, Page 16.

FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1989

Among the crowd watching the operations were uniformed members of the Women's Land Army, who are staging a reunion at the museum on September 17.

Organiser Mrs Frieda Feetham invited any former WLA member to contact the museum for details of the day, which will include cutting, carting and thrashing corn with horses and steam. As there were no records of who was in the Land Army, information about such events had to be spread by personal contact, she explained.

The museum is staging a vintage tractor event this Sunday.



APRIL 30: Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Gressenhall, Heavy Horses at work on the farm (2 to 5.20pm). Contact: 0362 860563.

Eastern Daily Press, Monday, May 1, 1989



Back to the land for girls of old brigade

THE days when horses provided the main working power in farm fields was recalled at the Gressenhall Rural Life Museum yesterday.

Heavy horses from Joe Godber, of Stanfield, and Mick Massey, of Wendling, were used to demonstrate harrowing, rolling and grass seed drilling at the museum's farm.

Dudley Crisp, who runs the farm, said the grass on the field being used for the demonstration had worn out. In a couple of months, ewes and lambs from the museum flock will be put on the new grass.

Among the crowd watching the operations were former members of the Women's Land Army in uniform, who are staging a reunion at the museum on September 17.

Organiser Frieda Feetham invited any former WLA member to contact the museum for details of the day, which will include cutting, carting and thrashing corn with horses and steam.



Former Women's Land Army girls at Gressenhall yesterday — left to right Eva Cullum, Frieda Feetham, Bunny Snelling, Eileen Daniels and Linda Ashbolt.



Former members of the Land Army who visited Gressenhall Rural Life Museum. Left to right - Mrs Eva Cullum, Mrs Frieda Feetham, Miss Bunny Snelling, Mrs Eileen Daniels and Mrs Linda Ashbolt.

Bygone farming days recalled

The Times, Friday, May 5, 1989

Reunion recalls Land Army years

Eastern Daily Press, Monday, June 12, 1989

VETERANS of the wartime Women's Land Army got together on Saturday to recall their years down on the farm.

More than 40 of the "girls" who all worked in the area around Gissing, near Diss, met at the village hall for lunch and tea.

One of the organisers, Frieda Feetham, recalled working all the year round, cutting sugar beet by hand, milking, harvesting and hedge cutting.

"We had to take on everything the men would have done," she said.

Co-organiser Bunny Snelling, busy in the kitchen with her helpers, was one of few tractor drivers, winning a trophy for her skill at the wheel in a wartime competition.

"But most of the work was done with horses," she said. Harvesting was done with pitchforks — "and hard work it was, too," she added.

A sing-song of all the wartime favourites was accompanied by accordionist Alan Ludkin.

TRACTOR

Co-organiser Miss Bunny Snelling, busy in the kitchen with her helpers, was one of few tractor drivers, winning a trophy for her skill at the wheel in a wartime competition.

"But most of the work was done with horses," she said. Harvesting was done with pitchforks — "and hard work it was, too," she added.

A sing-song of all the wartime favourites was accompanied by accordionist Mr Alan Ludkin.

Land Army "girls" will be on parade in numbers at an open day at Gressenhall Rural Life Museum on September 17.



★Former Women's Land Army members at their Gissing reunion

'Girls' remember wartime days down on farm

VETERANS of the wartime Women's Land Army got together on Saturday to recall their years down on the farm.

More than 40 of the "girls" who all worked in the area around Gissing met at the village hall for lunch and tea.

Mrs Bessie Cole was drafted to Norfolk from

her Huddersfield home in 1942 as a 19-year-old. Marrying the farmer's son, she has lived in the area ever since.

One of the organisers, Mrs Frieda Feetham, recalled working all the year round, cutting sugar beet by hand, milking, harvesting and hedge cutting.

"We had to take on everything the men would have done," she said.



Eastern Daily Press, Saturday, June 24, 1989

Wants

EX. Land Girl requires Women's Land Army Breeches to fit height 5' 7", also any other pieces of uniform. Tel. Wymondham 602530.

EX-LAND Girl requires Women's Land Army Breeches to fit height 5 ft. 7 in., also any other pieces of uniform. Tel. Wymondham 602530.

Day the evacuees first came to town

CROWDS poured into Wymondham railway station on Saturday to watch the 50th anniversary re-enactment of the arrival of the first wartime evacuees.

Local schoolchildren took the roles of the young Gravesend pupils who had gathered on the same platform on September 2, 1939, to be billeted with Wymondham families.

Instead of the tears and bewilderment of 50 years ago, there was suppressed excitement as the children, wearing 1930s-style clothes and clutching battered suitcases and eddies, left the station for Fairland Hall.

A fleet of gleaming vintage vehicles waited to carry the youngest children and pregnant "mums" to their destination.

Wymondham Heritage Society, whose 1939 committee organised the event, had taken great pains to provide other authentic touches — Civil Defence and Army uniforms were proudly worn as the welcoming party escorted the evacuees; a team of former Women's Land Army girls loaded up a wartime truck with provisions; and a Green Goddess fire pump stood by, ready for any emergency!

Even the present station sign had been covered over with a replacement bearing the London North Eastern Railway logo to add to the nostalgia.

"We were surprised at how many people turned up to watch. There must have been about 500," said committee chairman Mr Horace Wilkinson, who was resplendent in the uniform of a 1930s policeman.

He was joined by "station master" Mr David Turner, retired headteacher Mr John Sims (billeting officer), Mrs Jo Howell (evacuee supervisor) and other townsfolk in costume.

Refreshments awaited the group at Fairland Hall where an exhibition of memorabilia was on display to the public. The anniversary celebrations continued into the evening when a "Memories of 1939" concert of community, sketches and recollections was held at Wymondham High School.



Land Army "girls" wait on Wymondham station to load up some provisions

They'll meet again - and know when!

WYMONDHAM WILL HANG OUT the washing on the Siegfried Line as they take a step into the past tomorrow and remember the arrival of the first World War Two evacuees.

"We'll Meet Again" will be the theme tune for nearly 50 children and numerous parents as they take part in the reconstruction of the day on September 2, 1939, when children and mothers were transported to the Norfolk town from Gravesend to escape the beginning of the blitz.

The day will begin at the train station at 2.15pm as the children - in full cos-

tume and complete with gasmasks - will arrive to a welcome from town Mayor Philip Richardson, a billeting officer and a station master.

Then, after a reception at Fairland Hall with members of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service serving tea, and an exhibition of memorabilia, they will roll out the barrel with an evening of entertainment at Wymondham High School, Folly Road.

Sing songs and old-time dancing will be part of the nostalgic fun, with some of the first evacuees sharing their memories of arriving in Norfolk.

Wymondham Heritage Society *'Memories Of 1939'*

A Miscellany Of -

- ★ COMMUNITY SINGING
- ★ DANCING
- ★ LAND ARMY SKETCH
- ★ PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
- OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

7.30 to 10.00 p.m. Saturday 2nd September 1989
Wymondham High School (Folly Road Entrance)

LIMITED ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY
£2.00 Including Refreshments

ALL PROFITS TO WYMONDHAM MARKET CROSS APPEAL



[Faint, mostly illegible text from a newspaper page, likely the back of the previous page.]



SEPTEMBER 17: Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Gressenhall — "National Reunion of Women's Land Army & Grand Working Day." Turn the clock back — join the Land Girls and relive harvesting, threshing, ploughing, sing-songs (11 to 5pm).

BACK TO THE LAND HOW THE WAR CAME TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Page 9



Ex-land girls say thanks

ON behalf of 15 ex-land army girls who were billeted at the WLA Hutment hostel in Thorney, Cambridgeshire, I would like to say a very big thank you to all concerned for giving us such a wonderful, happy day at Gressenhall Rural Life Museum on Sunday, September 17.

Some of our "girls" travelled from Northumberland, London and Oldham to join in the fun and they all said it was well worth the long journeys and hope that they can visit Norfolk again.

Many thanks,
(Mrs) BETTY SPRIDGEON,
Church Street,
Whittlesey,
Peterborough.


 Friends of Gressenhall

**CALLING ALL
EX-LAND GIRLS**
 (And TIMBER CORPS VOLUNTEERS)
 Come to the
**NATIONAL REUNION and
GRAND WORKING DAY**
 Sunday, September 17th, 1989
 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
**GRESSENHALL RURAL LIFE MUSEUM,
Near DEREHAM**
 Admission £2 — Children Free
 Harvesting, Threshing, Ploughing
 Children's Activities, Stalls, Refreshments
A DAY OUT FOR ALL THE FAMILY
 Book the date now!
 Ring (0362) 860563 for more information
 SPACE AVAILABLE FOR COMMERCIAL STALLS
 Sponsored by the
Eastern Daily Press





W.L.A. Tunstead
24th September 1989.

Burnings W.L.A. reunion
4th July 1990.

Burnings reunion
15th June 1991.

Burnings reunion
23rd May 1992.

Tunstead Trosh.
30th September 1990

LAND GIRLS BORN AND BREAD



FORMER Norfolk land girls rose to a challenge — and beat the East Anglian record for bread-baking at their first attempt.

It involved a combined effort with threshing and milling wheat at Wroxham and Hoveton Lions' annual fund-raising event, the "Tunstead Trosh".

And they got grain from field to table in 58 minutes 54 seconds.

Baking organiser Mrs Frieda Feetham said: "We did it just for fun and never dreamed we'd manage the best time in East Anglia."

Her group, who served in the Women's Land Army, have helped with the Trosh for six years.

Devised by Staffordshire Veteran Tractor Engine Club, the race involves threshing 56lb of grain and turning it into bread in a field kitchen.

Mrs Feetham and her team — Mrs Mary Pestell, Mrs Lindy Ashvold and Mrs Joan Chapman — beat the record by three minutes.

Other events at this year's Tunstead Trosh, held at Hall Farm, home of Bill and Heather Bird, included displays of ploughing and tractors, a clay-pigeon shoot, classic-car display, and a hobbies exhibition.

Cash raised this year for Wroxham and Hoveton Lions has yet to be added up.

"But it's as much an event for people to get involved in the old-fashioned way of farming as anything else," said Mrs Bird.

EX WOMENS LAND ARMY (MEN WELCOME)
REUNION LUNCH
AT PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER 1989
LUNCH 12.30 for 1pm
SHORT CONCERT BY GILINGHAM SILVER BAND
TICKETS £5.50 (NOT MEAL) NOS LIMITED TO 80
APPLY MRS I. WHITE 3 MALTINGS CLOSE DISS
NORFOLK IP22 3YH TEL 643132 20th & 21st 1990
BY 1ST OCTOBER SAE PLEASE 30th 1990

● Former Land Army girls celebrate their record-breaking bake at Tunstead.

Eastern Daily Press, Monday, October 1, 1990



Frieda Feetham and her team celebrate their record bread-baking effort at Tunstead Trosh.

Team slices into a record

Former Norfolk land-girls rose to a challenge at the weekend — and smashed the East Anglian time record for bread-baking at their first attempt.

It involved a combined effort with threshing and milling wheat at Wroxham and Hoveton Lions' annual fund-raising event the "Tunstead Trosh" — and they got the grain from field to table in 58 minutes 54 seconds.

Baking organiser Frieda Feetham said: "We are thrilled. We did it for the fun of the thing — and never

dreamed we would manage the best time in East Anglia."

She said her group, who had all served in the Women's Land Army, had helped with the Trosh for some six years — and were thrilled to be asked to take part in the event.

The race, devised by Staffordshire Veteran Tractor Engine Club, involves threshing 56lbs of grain and turning it into bread in a field kitchen.

Mrs Feetham, and team Mary Pestell, Lindy Ashvolt and Joan Chapman, mixed, kneaded, proved and baked to beat the previous record for the region by three minutes.

Other events at this year's Tun-

stead Trosh, held at Hall Farm, home of Bill and Heather Bird, included exhibitions of traditional ploughing and tractors, a clay pigeon shoot, display of classic cars and a hobbies and models exhibition.

Mrs Bird said the event had been a great success, although somewhat dampened by mid-afternoon rain.

Cash raised for this year for Wroxham and Hoveton Lions had yet to be added up — but could possibly match last year's £600.

"But it is as much an event for people to get involved in the old-fashioned way of farming as anything else," said Mrs Bird.



Eastern Daily Press, Saturday, September 28, 1991

**WROXHAM LIONS
TUNSTEAD TROSH AND CAR BOOT SALE**

Sunday, September 29th
Market St., Tunstead.

Steam Threshing with live engines etc.,
Helicopter Rides, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Admission 50p

PARKING/CHILDREN FREE
Car Boot £3.50 pitch



EX. WOMANS LAND ARMY MEN WELCOME
REUNION LUNCH

AT PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE
 ON SAT. OCTOBER 12. 1991.

LUNCH 12-30 - FOR - 1PM LUNCH

TICKETS £5-50 (HOT MEAL) NOS LIMITED TO 80.

APPLY MRS I WHITE. 3 MALTINGS CLOSE DISS
 NORFOLK IP 22 3YH TEL 6431 32.

BY OCTOBER 3RD SAE PLEASE



● Land Army ladies Dorothy Hazell, Jean Aspinall, reunion organiser Ivy White, of Diss, and Nancy Randlesome, then of Eye.

We'll meet again - every year

WORLD War II Land Army girls gathered at Palgrave Community Centre on Saturday for a reunion and afternoon of nostalgia.

Organised by Ivy White, 65 women from all parts of the region gathered for the 11th annual reunion to exchange memories and treasured photographs.

"We had a grand time. It was lovely to see everyone again," said Mrs White, of Maltings Close, Diss.

"We all have mainly good memories, although some of the girls,

especially those close to the aerodromes, had bit of rough time with the bombings.

"We were all raw girls and many came straight from towns," she said.

Mrs White came from Wilmslow, and like many of the Land Girls, married a man in this area and never went home again.

Her daughter, Greta Sturgeon, prepared a hot lunch for the reunion and Mr and Mrs Alan Ludkin played background music.





EX BRITISH WOMENS LAND ARMY SOCIETY
ESSEX GROUP REUNION

89

SATURDAY 9th MAY 1992

THE WAVERLEY HALL HOTEL MARINE PARADE
CLACTON ON SEA

Reception 12.30pm for Buffet Lunch 1pm

IVY BENSON AND HER SWEET MUSIC

GUEST OF HONOUR Richard Spendlove
BBC Essex S.E. Prog:
Saturdays 9-12 pm

GUEST ARTIST Rev J W R Robinson

Tickets £9 each Farewell at 5pm.





EX B W L A SOC
ESSEX GROUP
REUNION



9 May 1992



PROGRAMME

- 12.30 Reception
1.00 Buffet Luncheon
Meet the guests
2.00 Ivy Benson with
her music
3.15 Tea, Cake and
Raffle time
3.30 Rev J W R Robinson
40's Musical Quiz
4.15 Sing and dance
with Ivy Benson
5.00 Auld Lang Syne

Thank you for coming
hope to see you all
again in 1993!







Picture: NICK LYONS



Tunstead Trosh vice-chairman Bill Bird (front, centre) stands between Sister Audrey Buxton (left) and Staff Nurse Liz Gaymer. Behind are Tony Green, Mike Barker, Frieda Feetham, Andrew Claydon and Graham Kirk.

Thrashing good idea reaps reward

Farmer Bill Bird came up with a thrashing good idea to raise money for Aylsham St Michael's Hospital.

Mr Bird, of Hall Farm, Tunstead, near North Walsham, put

his collection of antique machinery to good use during the summer by staging demonstrations of how things used to be down on the farm.

The Tunstead Trosh began seven years ago and always

proved popular. "I started when I felt we had enough machinery here to have a fund-raising drive of our own," he said.

"It started as an end of season get-together for steam enthusiasts

keen to watch corn thrashing in the traditional way."

This year the event was a record-breaker and coined in £800. With the combined support of the Lions, £1000 was handed to Aylsham Hospital nurses.

September 27, 1992

TUNSTEAD Trosh and Car Boot Sale, Sunday, September 27th, Market Street, Tunstead. Trosh begins 11 a.m., Car Boot begins 9 a.m. (£3.50 pitch), Admission 50p, children free, free parking. All profits to St. Michael's Hospital, Rheumatology Unit, Aylsham.





EX. WOMAN'S LAND ARMY

REUNION + LUNCH ON.

SAT. OCT. 10th 1992.

12-30pm FOR 1PM. LUNCH.

AT

PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

TICKETS £5-50 AVAILABLE FROM

MRS I WHITE - 3 MALTINGS CLOSE

DISS NORFOLK TEL. 0379 643132

SAE PLEASE HUSBANDS WELCOME.

EX WOMAN'S LAND ARMY

REUNION AND LUNCH ON

SAT. OCT. 9th 1993

12-30pm FOR 10CLOCK LUNCH.

AT.

PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

TICKETS. £5-50 AVAILABLE FROM

MRS I WHITE - 3 MALTINGS CLOSE

DISS NORFOLK. TEL 0379 643132

SAE PLEASE HUSBANDS WELCOME.

Paid 10/9/93



Bandleader Ivy Benson in her heyday, and (inset) as she was in retirement in Clacton in her last few years.

Pioneer bandleader dies

Ivy Benson, the first woman to succeed in the male-dominated dance hall world of the 1940s, died yesterday at the age of 79. She had stayed in the business to the end. She is credited with doing more than anyone else in Britain to force men to accept women as professional musicians, not just stage decoration.

Even in retirement in Clacton, Essex, where she suffered a heart attack and died in hospital yesterday, she played the organ at tea dances and at Age Concern charity concerts.

Ivy Benson launched her band in 1944



and played the top hotels and ballrooms in Europe. The band entertained the troops in Germany, the Middle East and Vietnam, did seasons at the London Palladium and were TV and radio regulars.

Yet when she launched her all-girl orchestra in 1944 male bandleaders sent a joint protest to broadcasters and booking agents not to touch her.

She started as a clerk at Burton's store in Leeds, playing clarinet and saxophone at night. "I had a hell of a life," she recalled, "and I so badly wanted to have a band of my own. It wasn't that much to ask for was it?"

Musical arrangers used to put wrong notes in the scores, but Ivy was wise to all the usual tricks.

"Then they tried to get us in other ways. They'd insinuate we were all lesbians. What nonsense. All my girls left me to get married," she recalled. She herself was married twice.

Ivy's advice was always the same when marriage was in the air: "I'd say to them if you get married don't stay in the band — this is farewell to romance. Take my advice and put your sax in the fridge!"

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY REUNION
Waverley Hotel, Clacton-on-Sea

Saturday 8th May, 1993
12.30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Ex-landgirl Evelyn Dixon, Essex Group ex-W. L. A. and Timber Corps Society has again invited Norfolk/Suffolk friends to join the above referenced reunion.

Both Ivy Benson with her music and Richard Spendlove of Radio Essex will again be present.

12.30 p.m. Reception for 1 p.m. Hot buffet luncheon. Menu includes home cured gammon/sliced topside beef/braised rice with peppers/pasta salad/quiche/fried chicken wings with spicy sauces/fishermans platter, tartare sauce/potatoes with prawns/game paté, melba toast/seasonal salads.

x W. L. A. or T. C. volunteer and would like to join a coach orwich at 9 a.m. and making pick-up stops along the Ipswich complete details below and return to - nam, "Halloween" Church Hill, Lower Tasburgh, NR15 1NB, Norfolk.

ESSEX GROUP EX BRITISH WOMENS
LAND ARMY AND TIMBER CORPS

Reunion & Lunch to be held at
the WAVERLEY HOTEL, MARINE PARADE,
CLACTON ON SEA ESSEX.

Saturday 8th May 1993

RECEPTION 12.30 - 1pm HOT BUFFET

Ivy Benson and her music.
Guest of Honour Richard Spendlove
BBC ESSEX SE PROGRAMME SATURDAYS
9-12pm

Tickets £11.50 Farewell 5.00pm

Bunnys reunion
12th June 93.



Bunnys reunion 11th June 1994.

With my Compliments Bunny



MRS L. ASHBOLT,
THE OLD FORGE, GR
DEOPHAM GREEN
WYMONDHAM
NR18 9AB.

"Hay making"

Womens Land Army.

Gressenhall 12th June 94
Jayne interviewed the
second girls for the
television.

Eastern Daily Press, Tuesday, June 14, 1994



Up, up and away! Jayne Evans visits a winch-launched hang-gliding school, near Beeston in Norfolk in Countrywide (Anglia, 7.30pm).

"Hay making"

Womens Seed Caring

Spessenhall 12th June 94



WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE PRESS OFFICE

MRS ASHBOLT,

APOLOGIES FOR THE DELAY.

PLEASE ACCEPT THESE PRINTS WITH
MY COMPLIMENTS

Regards

Jim M. Gervan

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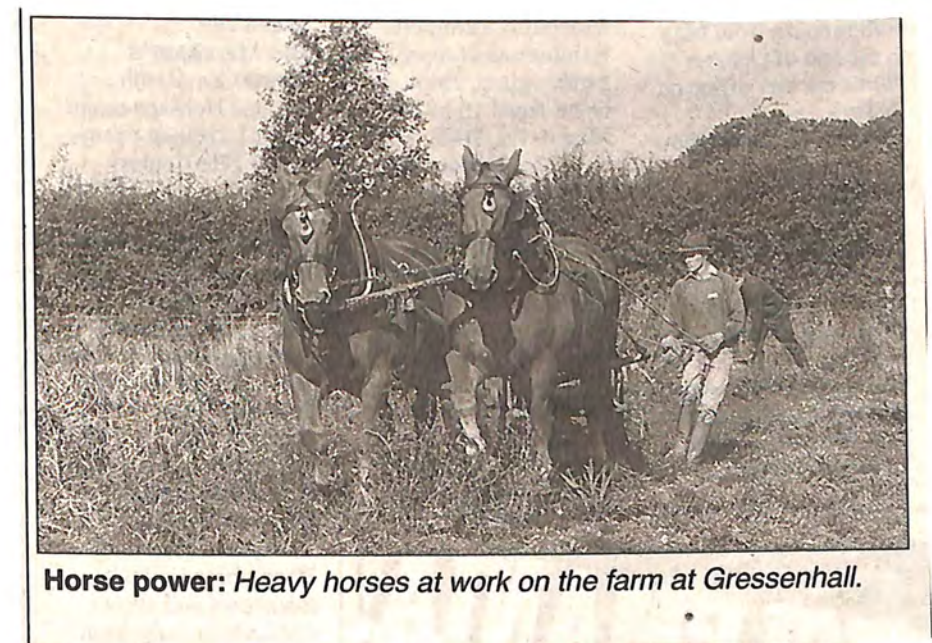






Horse power: Heavy horses at work on the farm at Gressenhall.





Horse power: Heavy horses at work on the farm at Gressenhall.



Former members of the Land Army meet up again for their annual reunion.

(LA2210)

A touch of nostalgia for Land Army girls

LAND Army girls renewed friendships and recalled the old days when they got together for their annual reunion at the weekend.

They travelled from as far afield as Staffordshire to remember the days when they worked on the

land in a variety of tasks.

Organiser Ivy White said the women have got together for the past 15 years and have already booked the Palgrave Community Centre for next autumn.

Mrs White said: "It all started with just a small reunion which

has gone on. We have developed some wonderful friendships and it is a pleasure to organise."

Catering for 59 guests is the responsibility of Mrs White's daughter Greta Sturgeon. "I could not manage this without her," said Mrs White.

Guest of honour was Ron Blake, chairman of the Mendlesham Royal British Legion branch while musical entertainment was provided by Alan and Gwenda Ludkin from Great Moulton.

The former Land Army girls decided to give £20 to Barnardos.

EX WHA. REUNION

OCTOBER. 22ND. 1994.

PALGRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE.

12-30 - 1PM. LUNCH.

TICKETS. £5-50. HUSBANDS WELCOME

PLEASE BOOK BY OCT 15TH TO

MRS I WHITE

3 HALTINGS CLOSE.

DISS

SALE PLEASE

NORFOLK. 1922 3YM

Boys Land Army Reunion 22nd Oct 94

433

ZZ
DS
OF
EZ

757

DA
XB
US
ED

Bottle Peach wine

Ticket under dinner
plate.

Tulip bulbs.

Raffle

VE DAY PREVIEW

Land Army girls go back to their roots



Picture:
SIMON LUNT

A forgotten army of wartime women workers is harnessing up VE Day memories.

Women's Land Army girls helped keep the nation's vital food supplies on the move while many of its men were away at war. Long days were spent milking cows, cutting crops, digging ditches and trimming hedges.

But when farmers ran across the fields to tell them the war was over the girls found extra energy for the parties that night. Pauline Watson, 72, of Ingham, recalled:

By **RICHARD BATSON**

"People were banging tin trays in the streets and singing. The pubs were full. We had hangovers the next day."

On the 50th anniversary of VE Day on May 8 she will join other former "land girls" keen to make sure the people on the Home Front are not forgotten in the celebrations.

Norfolk Shirehorse Centre owner David Bakewell is inviting all former Land

Army members to visit the centre free of charge, to join visitors watching and taking part in horse-drawn ploughing, drilling and harrowing.

"A lot of attention is being focused on the war in Europe. It is important these women are not forgotten," he said. Mrs Watson served for nine years as a "land girl," kitted out in the familiar uniform of brown cord breeches, green jumpers, sensible boots and felt hats. And there was a time for "sparking about" and chatting up the men at dances.

But she almost failed to make it to her VE Day shindig at the Balloon pub in Waterloo Road, Norwich.

She said: "The farmer ran into the milking parlour to tell me the war was over. I could not wait to get home but I took a corner too fast on my Excelsior motorcycle and went through a fence!"

● Norfolk Shirehorse Centre and Countryside Collection at West Runton is open from 10-5 on May 8. Former Land Army girls are invited to take along old photographs or their armbands.



You are needed in the fields

APPLY TO NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR LEAFLET & ENROLMENT
OR WRITE DIRECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR SCOTLAND

A poster calling for volunteers for the Women's Land Army

VE Day Special

News and advertising: 01263 513232

Hats off to the women workers

A FORGOTTEN army of wartime women workers is harnessing up VE Day memories.

Women's Land Army "girls" helped keep the nation's vital food supplies ticking over while many of its men were away at war.

Long tiring days were spent milking cows, cutting crops, digging ditches and trimming hedges.

But when local farmers came running to cowsheds and fields to tell them the war was over, the girls found extra energy for the parties that night.

Pauline Watson of Ingham, now 72, said: "People were banging tin trays in the streets, and singing all the

wartime songs. The pubs were full.

We had hangovers the next day." On the 50th anniversary of VE Day on Monday she will join other old "land girls" at a North Norfolk tourist attraction keen to make sure the people on the Home Front are not forgotten in the celebrations and commemorations.

Norfolk Shirehorse Centre owner David Bakewell is inviting all former Land Army members to visit free of charge, to join visitors watching and taking part in horse-drawn ploughing, drilling and harrowing.

"A lot of attention is being focused on the war in Europe — it is important these women are not forgotten,"

he said.

Mrs Watson did nine years service as a "land girl", kitted out in the familiar uniform of brown cord breeches, green jumpers, sensible boots and felt hats. And there was a tie for "sparking about".

But she almost never made it to her VE Day shindig at the Balloon pub in Waterloo Road, Norwich.

"The farmer ran into the milking parlour to tell me the war was over. I was doing the morning milking before my day off. I could not wait to get home to see my family, but I took a corner too fast on my Excelsior motorcycle and went through a man's fence!"



NEWS

Former landgirls Pauline Watson, Linda Ashbolt, Nancy Randsome and Dorothy Brown getting in the swing of the VE Day celebrations due to be held at Norfolk's Shire Horse Centre at West Runton.

At the reunion, former members of the Women's Land Army will be invited to try their hand at working with horses again.

But if the regular get-togethers these four enjoy are anything to go by, reminiscing will be the order of the day.



Come and help with the
VICTORY HARVEST



You are needed in the fields!

APPLY TO NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR LEAFLET & ENROLMENT FORM
OR WRITE DIRECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR SCOTLAND
15 GROSVENOR STREET, EDINBURGH.

Linda Ashbolt poses in her old Land Army uniform at the West Runton Shire Horse Centre. Inset is a wartime poster calling for Land Army volunteers.

Top tourism personality award is shire delight

It was "shire delight" for animal lover David Bakewell to be voted top tourism personality in North Norfolk.

Tourists themselves voted for the Norfolk Shire Horse Centre boss who stars with his horses in two 90-minute shows a day during the season, which begins this weekend. Mr Bakewell said he was proud to win the award as he believed attractions needed to entertain. And he was delighted that the public felt the centre at West Runton was getting it right. Other major awards went to the Muckleburgh Collection, which was named top attraction; Cromer Pier Show for best theatre; and Thursford Collection named best museum.

Overstrand dominated the accommodation section with Ivy Farm Cottages and Caravan Park winning the best static caravan site and Poppyland Cottages topping the self-catering.

Overstrand Cottage Garden Centre and Tea Rooms was runner-up in the shop category won by Sheringham Pottery.

The tourism awards are presented by North Norfolk council on the basis of votes cast by visitors on attractions delivering excellent service.

The full list of awards is: tourist attraction, Muckleburgh Collection (runner-up Letheringsett Mill); museum, Thursford Collection



Picture: SARAH HUN

PERSONALITY PLUS: David Bakewell, of Norfolk Shire Horse Centre, West Runton, shows his "top personality" award to William, the shire horse.

(Fakenham Gas Museum); theatre, Cromer Pier Show; hotel, Pheasant, Kelling (Cliftonville, Cromer); guest-house, Brightside, MacDonald Road, Cromer (Newlands, Trunch Road, Mundesley); self-catering,

Poppyland Cottages, Overstrand (Norfolk Country Cousins, Ridlington); touring caravan park, Woodhill Park, East Runton (Old Brick Kilns, Little Barney); static caravan park, Ivy Farm, Overstrand

(Cable Gap, Bacton); chalet park, Red House, Bacton (Kings, Cromer); shop, Sheringham Pottery (Overstrand Garden Shop and Cafe); takeaways, Kebab Delight, Holt (Mary Jane's, Cromer); public-

houses, White Horse, Cromer (Bell, Wiveton); personality, David Bakewell, Norfolk Shire Horse Centre (Cromer tourist information centre staff); transport, Norwich airport park and ride into the city.



Wartime spirit still cements the friendships made in the army half a century ago

Landgirls will work with horses again

MEMBERS of the Women's Land Army are being called up to join in VE day celebrations at Norfolk's Shire Horse Centre at West Runton.

In the run-up to the event, five landgirls met up at the centre this week to remember what life was like for them in the WLA. Although the war ended in 1945, the WLA was not disbanded until 1951 and women continued to join for several years after the war.

"I remember 13 of us from Norfolk went to Buckingham Palace for the disbanding ceremony," said Pauline Watson, who served in the WLA for eight years. "There were about 500 landgirls, all in uniform and I can still see the soldiers teaching us how to march."

Uniforms consisted of corduroy britches, shirt, tie, woollen jumper, greatcoat, boots and a felt hat or beret.

"We were very proud of our uniforms, and although we used to wear dungarees on the farm, we would wear full uniform to the dances," said Linda Ashbolt, who worked at Elmstead Market on a fruit farm for four years.

Girls living in hostels moved around every day, doing jobs such as hedging, ditching and field work, while

those on farms could stay for several years.

Nancy Randelsome and Dorothy Brown both lived in a hostel at Blundeston and recalled never knowing where they would be working from one day to the next.

"There wasn't any work for us one day so we had to go and do a day in a kipper fac-

tory on the coast," said Mrs Brown. "The smell was terrible."

"I came down from Blackpool in 1948," said Mrs Randelsome. "But I stayed on after we were disbanded. Living in a hostel was great. The social life was good - much better for us than for those girls living on farms."

Between 50 and 60 Norfolk landgirls meet up two or three times a year at different events in the county and some travel further afield to annual reunions in London and Birmingham.

"The companionship is wonderful," said Mrs Newbolt. "When we meet up, the years just slip away and we talk about what we all did."

There will be heavy horse demonstrations at the centre on May 8 and ex-landgirls are asked to bring any badges, photos or items of uniform to gain free admission.

More details from Norfolk Shire Horse Centre on 01263 226362.



We'll meet again....and again....and again. Wartime Landgirls preparing the way for a big reunion at the Norfolk Shire Horse Centre on VE day. But this group meets often....and the years slip away.



DAY TO REMEMBER ■ Museum trip down memory lane

Clock is turned back to the 'good old days'

By DOMINIC TURNBULL

Nostalgia filled the air yesterday as the clock was turned back to celebrate Norfolk's last golden age.

More than 800 people came from as far afield as London to take a trip down memory lane in the historic surroundings of Norfolk Rural Life Museum at Gressenhall, near Dereham, to reminisce about life in the days following the end of the second world war.

A Day to Remember featured a range of crafts like basket making and farming methods that were still a common sight as late as the 1950s.

Also demonstrated was the back-breaking task of hand washing clothes that housewives were forced to endure before the widespread introduction of washing machines and other labour-saving devices during the 60s.

Even then it was not unusual for women to tackle a pile of dirty clothes armed only with well-known household favourites like Sunlight Soap and the famous Reckitts Blue washing powder.

Gressenhall education officer John Barwell said: "In the post-war years

▼ THEN AND NOW

An at-a-glance guide to prices in the 50s and now.

1955: Stella 17-inch television, £82.10 shillings.

1996: Panasonic 21-inch remote control television, £299.99.

1955: Hillman Husky car, £564 on the road.

1996: Ford Fiesta 1.3 litre, £8720 on the road.

1955: 3-bedroom semi-detached house at Dereham, £1950.

1996: 3-bedroom semi-detached house at Dereham, £45,000

1955: Three-speed bike, £11.7 shillings and sixpence.

1996: 21-gear mountain bike, £160 upwards.

1955: Three-piece suite, £49.10 shillings.

1996: Three-piece suite, £799.

washing was still seen as a woman's job. No wonder the phrase 'washday blues' became popular."

As the Archive Film Show depicted, the post-war years saw an explosion of new technology. At the centre was television,

which had only one channel, BBC1. Cinema also entered a boom period as screen icons like Marilyn Monroe became household names.

Museum administrator Christine Smith said: "I remember the first TV in our house. It had a flexible plastic screen and was made by Ferranti. It was wonderful."

The 50s saw a boom in transport and the exhibition featured two motorcycles from the period.

Silas Siliprandi, a member of the Vintage Motorcycle Club, said: "The post-war years were the last golden age for motorcycles. Names like Norton, Triumph and Velocette were all common sights on the roads. There were also many old Army motorbikes for sale."

Teenage fashion emerged for the first time during the 50s. Inspired by their television and pop music heroes like Buddy Holly, groups such as the famous Teddy Boys in drainpipe trousers and swept-back hair, became a common sight in Norfolk.

As memories were shared and evoked together yesterday it was clear that the past and the present had for once, met happily.

■ COMMENT - Page 12

From rationing to the age of technology

Nostalgic visitors were unanimous in praising the event's memory-evoking power. Adrian and Sue Edwards, from Briston, were impressed by the variety of displays.

Adrian said: "The exhibition is like a trip down memory lane. Seeing the displays brings back childhood memories to me. I still remember the horse and cart delivering coal to the house."

Sue said: "The years after the war were a time of transition. There was still rationing but it

was also the start of the technological age." She added: "Although it is easy to look at the past with rose-tinted glasses I can't help thinking it was a more innocent time. Children could still play safely." Equally impressed was fellow visitor Alan Harvey, from Bungay.

"The organisers should be congratulated. There is a lot to see, it is very interesting and it gives an excellent insight into the past," he said.



TIGHT SQUEEZE: Joan Chapman and education officer John Barwell get to grips with a mangle.



IMPRESSED: Visitor Alan Harvey



NOSTALGIA: From left, Paul Lewis on his 1915 Marshall engine, inspecting an 1899 Panhard et Levassor car and a 1953 Ariel motorcycle.



Digging for stardom



Land Girls: At a crop blessing in Farnham, Surrey, in 1944

Land Girls actresses put in the spadework

THE Land Girls complained they were the unsung heroines, their wartime efforts lacking the glamour of the Wrens or the WRAF.

Now three of Britain's brightest young actresses are to show that it wasn't all muck-heaps and slurry for the 200,000 who kept the farms running during World War II.

Rachel Weisz, Catherine McCormack and Anna Friel have traded their glamorous wardrobes for V-neck jumpers, breeches and

wellies while working on farms to prepare for their roles in a film based on Angela Huth's bestselling novel *Land Girls*.

The three cut unlikely figures as they learned to 'dig for victory', catch rats and throw mangelwurzel in preparation for filming, which began in Dulverton, on the edge of Exmoor.

Echoing the words of the original Land Girls, Anna said: 'It was difficult but good fun.'



Glamour Girls: From left, Rachel Weisz, Catherine McCormack and Anna Friel, during filming in Somerset

Land ahoy

AS A former Land Girl, I found Angela Huth's book on the Land Girls very true to life and am looking forward to the

forthcoming film. Not all the girls were billeted on farms. Lots of us lived in basic hostels where we slept in dormitories of 20 to 25 girls, each allocated a bunk bed in a cubicle.

When the warden got us up in the morning, there was a mad scramble for the bathroom where the previous day's clothes were drying. You were very fortunate to locate your own socks, for example, because unless clothes were marked they disappeared.

If you were unlucky, you were left with socks with holes in — and socks were most important when wellies were normal footwear.

After breakfast, there was another rush to the bike shed to grab a decent bicycle. Then it was off to work, tying raspberry canes, picking sprouts or digging up carrots.

Once we went threshing on a farm where, because tea was in short supply, we were given cider to drink. It was very strong and, not being used to it, most of us fell asleep in the chaff.

On Fridays, we went to the cinema where we were allowed to sit on the floor at the front for 6d, which resulted in stiff necks. I still keep in touch with my friends from those happy

days and try to attend the Land Army reunions.

JEAN HOPKINS,
Lighthorne, Warwickshire.

Eagle-eyed

SIMON HEFFER did not compare like with like in criticising the late lamented Eagle and comparing it so unfairly with the Beano. The former was a magazine while the latter is a comic.

The Eagle's new owners sacked Dan Dare creator Frank Hampson without realising that it was his feature that sold the Eagle, and there followed further takeovers which, sadly, sent the publication to an early grave.

It did not lack humour. Each strip contained light-hearted moments and humorous characters, as well as the out and out 'funnies' such as Harris Tweed and Chicko. It boasted the finest collection of artists and writers, and it gave young children a lot to think about.

There's nothing wrong with quality or being 'intellectual' but, in the race to lower standards, the Eagle went the way our TV programmes are going now.

ALAN VINCE,
Chatham, Kent.

Frolicking in the farmyard

Mummy thought that there were just lots of horses at the Shire Horse Centre, but when we arrived, we saw lots of other animals as well, some performing in a farmyard frolics show.

The show started with a demonstration of harnessing a huge Shire horse called William, who is 25 years old. Then the show man (Daddy called him the Pied Piper of West Runton but I know he is really called David Bakewell) got all the children to follow him down to a field where he showed us how farmers used horses to dig up the ground for them in the days before tractors were invented.

The second part of the show was presented by George May who had lots of very clever animals. There was Sophie the goat who could walk on two legs, Jackie the carrion crow who could juggle with three balls, a ferret who disappeared down a man's trouser (Daddy was covering his eyes at this point, I don't know if Mummy was giggling) and the collie dog who could jump through hoops, open and close a gate and jump through a sack.

George was so clever he even got a hen to share her lunch and a half-pint of milk with the ferret.

The final part of the show was a horse and foal parade when we saw most of the

This week Hannah Morris saw quite a show at the Norfolk Shire Horse Centre at West Runton.

horses at the centre.

When it had finished all the children piled on to the back of a cart and had a ride around the centre pulled by one of the Shire horses.

Then we headed for the children's farm to meet some of the rabbits, pigs, chicken, peacocks and other animals. Sometimes they have a pigs party and Daddy says that my little brother Thomas would feel very at home.

Meanwhile Thomas had spotted an old tractor in the adventure playground and I found an old gypsy caravan and explored it with my friend Naomi.

I was having so much fun that when Mummy offered me a chocolate bar I said no. Daddy said it was the first time ever. This time Daddy was right.



Having a ride on a farm cart.

Naomi and me feeding a Shetland pony.

The ferret and chicken share a half-pint of milk.



■ FACTfile

► **Location:** Signposted off the A149 and A148 between Cromer and Sheringham

► **Opening:** Open 10-5pm every day until October 29 except Saturdays from September 9.

► **Admission:** Adults £3.50, senior citizens £2.50, children up to 16 £2, under 4s free.

► **Daily shows:** Two shows daily from 11.15-12.30 and 3-4.15pm

► **Saturday children specials:** Until September 2 children get in for £1 on Saturdays and special events such as a pigs party, animal feeding and pony rides.

► **More details:** 01263 837339.

■ HANNAH'S top tip

When they ask for male volunteers to put a ferret down his trouser leg, get Thomas to shout "I want a wee wee". Daddy will jump up in panic, Thomas will sit straight down and Daddy will get picked out to make friends with the ferret. Ha, ha. (PS This was Mummy's idea actually).

Out & about



Down memory lane with the Land Army girls

16 DISS EXPRESS - September 27 1996



All smiles as they share happy memories at their reunion in Palgrave, the former Land Army girls today.

Land Army Girls go back to the past

By Melenie Taylor

FORMER Land Army girls from across the area converged on Palgrave Community Centre on Saturday for their annual get-together.

Around 44 women, some accompanied by their husbands, turned up to enjoy a chat and a to talk about their memories of working on the land.

Accordianist Alan Ludkin, and his wife Gwenda, entertained the audience after lunch with a selection of war-time songs.

Some of the women got up to dance, while others just enjoyed a chat with old friends.

A raffle was held at the centre, and the afternoon ended with a cup of tea and a biscuit.

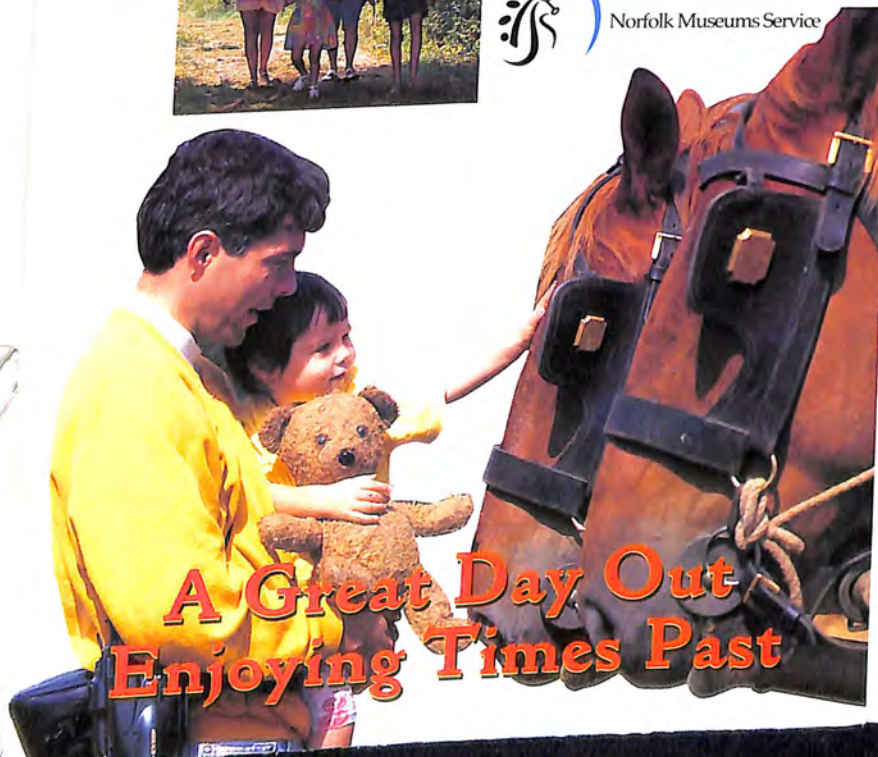
Greta Sturgeon, who co-ordinated the catering, said: "It was a brilliant day and everyone enjoyed themselves."

The event was organised by Mrs Ivy White, of Diss.

Friends Ivy White and Joyce Coe, left, and Gwen Spink and Shella Garwood take a turn on the dance floor, right.







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Pam & MARY

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LINDA ASHFIELD

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OUR COUSIN BUNNY

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NR35 1HA
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X. W.L.A. REUNION

SAT. OCTOBER. 14th 1995.

- GRAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

12-30 — 1PM LUNCH

ETS £5-50. HUSBAND WELCOME

BOOK BY OCT 6th 1995.

EX W.L.A. REUNION

WEDDAY SEPT 21st 1996

RAVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

12-30 FOR 1PM LUNCH

ETS £5-50. — HUSBANDS WELCOME

BOOK BY SEPTEMBER 14th 1996.



Norfolk Museums Service

Castle Museum Norwich NR1 3JU

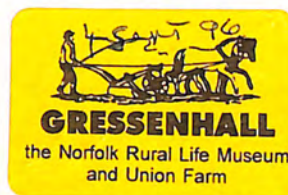
Fax: (01603) 765651

Tel: Norwich (01603) 223624

Direct line:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:



Mrs Linda Ashbolt
The Old Forge, Deopham St.
Wymondham
Norfolk

August 6th 1996

Dear Mrs Ashbolt

On September 4th we are holding a day of events and activities at the Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Gressenhall especially aimed at older people. After discussions with Mrs Frieda Feetham we have agreed to include a re-union of ex-Women's Land Army and Timber Corps members as part of the day. We will provide a table for members to picnic at and will serve you with a cup of tea. Please bring your own picnic. In the early afternoon we have arranged for keyboard players and a volunteer to lead community singing of appropriate Second World War songs. We hope to intersperse these with reminiscences of the Land Army and Timber Corps.

I do hope you will be able to join other members that day. Admission is free for everyone aged 50 plus. I enclose an information leaflet about the day and more general information about the museum.

Yours sincerely,

KS

Katrina Siliprandi
Head of Education



REUNION: Ivy White, above left, who has set up the meeting. Right: Ivy as a Land Army girl in the 1940s.

Wartime work on the country farms

Former Land Army girls converge on Palgrave next week to talk about their work during the second world war.

The "girls", now in their 70s and 80s, will be meeting through the efforts of Ivy White, who worked as a member of the Women's Land Army at Rickingham.

More than 100 former members attended some of her get-togethers in the 1980s, but numbers have dwindled in recent years.

Those arriving for lunch at the Palgrave Community Centre near Diss on September 27 will be regaled with wartime songs.

Mrs White, then Ivy Booth, went into the Land Army from her native Cheshire as a 19-year-old and arrived at Bury St Edmunds station in a state of trepidation.

She was to be trained at Shimpling and admits that the first time she was shown into a cow shed she was terrified.

She soon learned not to be afraid and became a relief milker on nearby farms before getting a permanent posting at F W Barker's Hepworth Hall Farm at Rickingham.

"The work was very hard, but everyone was happy. It was a big sense of pulling together," said Mrs White, who works full-time in a charity shop at Diss where she lives with husband Charlie. They have a son and daughter and four grandchildren.

She had two escapes while working in Suffolk, one in which bullets hit her bicycle as she took cover in a ditch.

On another occasion, an aircraft crashed into a field close to where she was working. The crew and nurses on board were killed.

Guest speaker this year will be Jean Neve of Diss, who will talk about her work inspecting farms during the war.

It really was a day to remember

More than 1000 people from across East Anglia were yesterday whisked back to the days of steam power, cooking on the range and traditional crafts.

The time travel came at a Day To Remember event at Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Gressenhall, near Dereham. The event was especially aimed at over-50s but was also enjoyed by the younger generation who received first-hand accounts of years gone by from parents and grandparents.

Rain kept some people away and forced crowds to take cover during the day, but museum curator Andrew Mackay was delighted with the event's success. "The atmosphere has been just great," he said.

Visitors were able to see blacksmith Tony Keeble, basketmaker Rob King and baker Norman Olley at work.

In Cherry Tree Cottage, Sally North took passers-by back to 1907, chatting about the goings-on in her family and showing how to cook on the range.

The 1950s games, lantern slide show, community singalong, traction engine and traditional horse ploughing were among other events that proved popular.

There was also a Land Army reunion which gave many women a chance to meet up with old friends.

Picture: GRAHAM CORNEY



YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS: Women's Land Army 'girls' Betty Ulrych, left, and Mary Emms at Gressenhall.

CRITICS' CHOICE



Roxy's Toolbox, the Norwich street entertainers, appear on Anglia's Streetwise at 11.20pm.

1997
Eva + I didn't go to reunion



Norfolk Museums Service

Castle Museum Norwich NR1 3JU
Fax: (01603) 765651
Tel: Norwich (01603) 223624
Direct line:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Mrs Linda Ashbolt
The Old Forge, Deopham St.
Wymondham
Norfolk

August 27th 1997

Dear Mrs Ashbolt,

Just to let you know that the day for older people on September 3rd at the Norfolk Rural Life Museum is going ahead. I enclose a leaflet about it. We will serve a cup of tea for the ex-Women's Land Army and Timber Corps members at about 12.30 on the main lawn in front of the museum.

Frieda Feetham has asked me to let you know that she is not able to organise transport this year. I do hope you will still be able to come and look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Katrina Siliprandi
Head of Education

A joint service of the County & District Councils at
Norwich, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth,
Gressenhall, Thetford, Cromer, Walsingham.

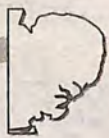
Director: Mrs Catherine M Wilson OBE FSA FMA



5th June 1999.

WLA reunion in Hampden Hall
Det. me & Joan.

NEWSDAY



Commemorating human rights

CAMPAIGNERS are to hold an hour of remembrance to commemorate Human Rights Day on December 10. The event, organised by Amnesty International in Bury St Edmunds, will take place at 7.30pm at St John's Church in the town.

Spokesperson Gitti Dunham said anyone concerned with the right to life, liberty, security, food and shelter should join the ceremony. Human Rights Day commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. "Amnesty International's goal is to ensure as many people as possible are aware of this special day and the importance of the protection of human rights for all people. They are our rights. If we guard them for others, we guard them for ourselves."

Award for top sports

Suffolk sports stars have been nominated for a top award. Three talented sports stars from Suffolk have been shortlisted for an award from BBC's Look East. Television viewers from the county are being asked to telephone to vote in two different categories, individual achievement and team achievement. All three sports stars fall under the individual category, they are Lowestoft's long distance runner Paul Evans, who won the Chicago marathon, the Newmarket jockey Frankie Dettori, who won a magnificent seven races at one meeting, and the Suffolk yachtswoman Samantha Brewster who became the first woman to sail around the world against prevailing winds. Look East will be running features on all the nominees beginning December 2. The lines will open on December 6 and they'll remain open until December 10. The results will be announced on December 19 and 20.

A good, local employer

Managers at St Edmundsbury Borough Council are celebrating an award for being a good employer. It has become the first local authority in Suffolk to win the Investors in People award for the whole council. Richard O'Driscoll, chair of the personnel committee, said: "This award proves we are investing in training and development of our staff and this investment is paying good dividends in the way we serve local people."

The recognition completes a hat-trick of awards for the council. Earlier this week it won the Government's Charter Mark Award for leisure and housing benefit services and has also scooped the European quality award for environmental health and leisure.

New Labour chairman

A new chairman of the Labour Party's Bury St Edmunds Constituency group has been elected.

Judy Rogers, of Stowmarket, has just taken over from outgoing chairman Stan Robinson, who had to resign because of work commitments. The constituency covers a wide area, including Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, Needham Market and Stowupland.

Thieves off with bubbly

Thieves fled with two bottles of champagne after breaking into a Suffolk business.

The burglars snatched the bubbly along with a Panasonic television and a computer from the premises of C Olley & Son in Fincham Road, Mildenhall.

The building was broken into during the weekend. Anyone with information should contact Mildenhall Police on 01284 774100.

Bring and buy for LEPROA

LEPROA, the international leprosy charity based in Colchester, is holding a Great Bring and Buy Sale on Friday. The event is part of the nationwide Blue Peter Appeal for Leprosy and will take place in the United Reform Church, Lion Walk, Colchester, from 10am to 3pm.

More tales from the home front with the Ada under enemy fire

TWO DAYS before her 18th birthday was Ada Clarke's first day in the Land Army.

"I went by local bus to East Bergholt, where I was to work on a small market garden," recalls Ada, now Mrs Newman, and living in Martlesham.

"Two other girls were already working there and lived in the owner's house. I went to board with a family in a council house close by. I enjoyed working in the greenhouses and learned all about tomatoes and grape vines.

"I was also taught to double dig. Only weighing seven stone and being 4ft 10 ins tall, it was something to keep up with the others. They both left within two weeks of each other and were replaced with two more, who also left after a very short time!

CATHY BROWN meets Ada Clarke of Martlesham and hears her fondly remembered wartime stories



"We worked from 7 am until 4 pm, Monday to Friday and 7 am until noon on Saturday, with Sunday off, so I did go home to Ipswich every weekend."

After six weeks, Ada was given a new posting: she went on the train, with her bicycle, to Campsea Ashe, to a newly opened Hostel at the Old Rectory, where she was to stay until December 1946.

"There were about 10 other girls, and we slept in a large bedroom on iron bedsteads. These could easily be adjusted so that they collapsed when you lay down - a trick that often occurred!

"We were very comfortable, really, as well fed as we all were in those days of rationing."

Lunch was dripping, beetroot and cheese sandwiches, with ginger cake, "packed in a wicker hamper and carried on a cycle by whoever in the gang was brave enough" to wherever the girls were working.

Jobs included picking blackcurrants, picking up potatoes and "picking up sticks" - helping to clear all the old roots left behind after bulldozers had cleared meadows of hedges and trees: "not actually hard work, but boring after a few days," says Ada.

"We always went back to the hostel for a hot meal of meat and vegetables, and then a cup of cocoa before bedtime."

More bedrooms were added to the hostel, and there was an "invasion" of girls from Lancashire and Yorkshire, bringing the total to 42.

"There was some rivalry between North and South, Protestants and Catholics, but all soon adjusted and great friendships developed," says Ada, who still corresponds with a "girl" from Manchester.

"By this time we didn't have to cycle to work. We went further afield by lorry and at one period an old Eastern Counties Bus. We didn't always all go together but worked in gangs with a "forewoman," and sometimes a visit from an area forewoman."

"We worked a five and a half day week, so I was still able to go home to Ipswich at weekends."

Work varied according to the seasons: carrot pulling, pea picking, beet hoeing, muck spreading, hedging and ditching, with groups staying on different farms during harvest.

"We got tired, fed up at times and very, very wet and cold, especially at sugar beet harvesting," Ada recalls.

"It was most annoying when you'd worked all day in fog and drizzle, with sacks for aprons, 'pulling' - knocking and laying the beet in rows - then instead of going back the next day to the easier job of 'topping', you were sent to another farm to 'pull and knock' all over again."

"Compared to some of the land girls, hostel life wasn't too bad. We were allowed one bath a week (two for those who never went home at weekends) taken in turns by a rota."

"Often we cheated and got in as your special mate got out. Exceptions were made on really dirty jobs: thrashing and straw baling - and you made sure you really did get back dirty and greasy to get that extra bath!"

"On really bad, rainy days, wooden frames were placed round the edges of the dining tables, and dried peas were tipped out for us to pick out the bad ones. It was really monotonous, but we devised all sorts of games and singing to relieve the boredom."

One day that was anything but boring, Ada was working in a gang in a field and was machine-gunned by a German fighter plane!

"We all jumped into the ditch, except the one who was shouting: 'Don't panic!' who fainted in the

We all jumped into the ditch, except the one who was shouting 'Don't panic!' and who fainted in the field!



Long hours, little pay but still happy

"I STARTED my service on January 7, 1942, and went to a newly built Land Army Hostel with nine other girls," remembers Mrs D Mann, who now lives in Little Tey.

"We were the first intake to the hostel, which was to house 40. Having been born and bred in London and working the previous four years as a typist in the City, the change could not have been more different."

The hostel was at Stansted and the girls were sent out to farms

around the area. Their first job was cutting overgrown hedges and digging out ditches on farms where field drainage had been neglected during the depression years.

Later experience included hoeing, singling and harvesting sugar beet, and "travelling" (stooking) barley and wheat at harvest-time.

"During the potato harvest we had a rushed job on one farm as the Americans had arrived to start building one of their airfields," recalls Mrs Mann. Now it is the third London airport!

"I later went to a training centre at

Battlesbridge to learn how to milk and look after cows."

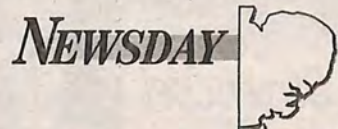
Her four years' service ended on a farm at St Osyth.

"On looking back, the work was hard, with long hours and little pay, but we had some very happy times, and we were helping the country's war effort," she says. "I must say that in all the different lodgings on farms with ordinary country people, although living a London girl, I was never in a dirty household, and was always treated as one of the family."

Winifred Gamble, from Bury St Edmunds, worked on a fruit farm at Risby during the war and pays tribute to the Land Army girls from the Risby Hostel who worked alongside her and did "a jolly noble job."

"My sister was in charge of a Hostel at Little Bradley, near Haverhill, and the girls did a course on preparing to 'keep house' when they finished working on the land," she remembers.

"This later moved to Bury, and it grew in popularity."



Concert in tune with hospital

A CONCERT given by Suffolk Concert Band raised £400 for the Ipswich Hospital Radio last week. The highlight of their programme at the Castle Hill United Reform Church was the guest appearance of Adrian Hopgood. He has had a long association with the band and recalled hearing the Castle Hill organ being played at Clacton when he was a child. Accompanied by Suffolk Concert Band, he gave a virtuoso performance of the 12th Street Rag on six instruments consecutively - cornet, euphonium, clarinet, saxophone, recorder and the organ.

Between the lines

A serving train driver will give a talk and slideshow to the Colchester branch of the East Anglia Railway Museum on Friday.

A Driver's Eye View - Part 4, with Dave Newell, is set to go ahead at the Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester, at 7.30pm.

Mr Newell is described as a man who rarely travels without his camera, giving members of the museum branch an up-to-the-minute record of the railways of Britain.

The meeting is open to all, with an admission charge of £1.50.

Chantry celebrations

The Chantry Area Housing Office in Ipswich celebrated its 10th anniversary yesterday.

It was the first to open under the borough council's policy of decentralised housing management. Since then the council's closer to home policy has been extended and expanded and now many more services are provided from outlets right in the heart of the various Ipswich communities.

The housing offices are connected to the Civic Centre with computer, providing access to many other services, so people don't have to go to the town centre for help and advice.

Appeal for donations

An appeal is being made for donated items to go into Christmas hampers for elderly people.

Collection points have been set up in pubs, shops and businesses around Bury St Edmunds and donations will be accepted up to next Wednesday.

Local schools are also helping the appeal, which is supported by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the town's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Licensed Victuallers Association, and charities. The hampers will be made up on December 20 ready for distribution in time for Christmas.

Operation Santa cash

Operation Santa Claus, SGR-FM and Amber Radio's annual charity fundraising appeal for local charities, has raised £53,000 this year with thousands more still to come. The figure, up on last year, will be a big boost to local charities in the Ipswich and Bury areas.

The organisers would like to thank all those who contributed and participated in this year's appeal.

Brochure details

A brochure full of Christmas Holiday activities taking place at Ipswich Borough Council sports centres, swimming pools, play centre, mansion and museum is available now. Covering December 23 to January 3, the brochure is free and can be ordered on the holiday hotline at Maidenhead Sports Centre on 01473 680644.

Felixstowe flag day

A flag day held in Felixstowe raised £869 for the Fire Service National Benevolent Fund.

FSNBF representative at Felixstowe Fire Station, Dave Kemp thanked everyone in the area who donated to the event and who helped with the collection.

Boys Brigade concert

Residents of the old people's home in Prince of Wales Drive, Stoke Park, Ipswich, were entertained to a concert on Sunday by the 3rd Ipswich Boys Brigade Band.

Mud, sweat



WARTIME MEMORIES: Peggy Moule, of Newmarket, with a portrait of her in 1945 and a thank you letter signed by the Queen

Milking goats and a regular

JEAN Wilding-Walsh was working for the Ministry of Agriculture on the Tuberculin Testing Scheme for cattle, when it was put on hold for the war period. "Feeling useless, I tried to join the WRNS," she says. Unfortunately, she forgot to mention that her father had been a naval officer in the First War, and so "didn't get very far." So she tried for a nursing career, and was accepted by Great Ormond Street, subject to a satisfactory report from her doctor. She passed the medical part, but failed on the last question: "Do you think this candidate would make a good nurse?"

"He put the one word: 'no'." The Land Army was Jean's third choice, and on her 21st birthday, she found herself working as a private gardener for a vicar in north Essex, living in the vicarage with the family. "It was a doddle of a job for a land girl. I learnt to milk goats (blind-folding them when on heat to stop them jumping up and down), feed the chickens and produce all the vegetables." But she did not feel as if she was helping with the war effort, and took the opportunity when it came to move to a fruit farm on the Essex/Suffolk border.

"This time I really fell on my feet as the farmer's wife was a fabulous cook, and she insisted that her girls should have a bath every day - something that some land girls hardly saw throughout their service!"

Jean was the first of three and she remembers the astonishment of former factory girl Gladys, when the farmer's wife decided to dress for dinner in a velvet gown the night



COUNTRY LIFE: From left, Jean, Barbara and Gladys enjoying a well-earned rest in the sun and right, wrapping up warm for dog-walking in the fields

she arrived. "Gladys was a marvelous companion, singing all day long as she pruned the trees or picked the apples, without ever repeating herself," says Jean. "Barbara, the third and youngest member of our team, managed to eat 15 apples before breakfast (only the blemished ones) without any ill effects. We always gave up count as to what her daily total was!"

Throughout the year, the three girls did two hours before breakfast. "And in winter we would often sit up our ladders for a time until dawn broke and we could see what we were doing with our secateurs!" The farm had three dogs, a Great Dane, a West Highland and a Dachshund. "Each dog had his/her own land girl, but we did not do the choosing: the dogs chose their girls

and stuck by them," says Jean. "We ate breakfast and lunch at the farm and collected our evening meal to take to our bungalow down the road. It was a marvellous arrangement, except that, originally, there was no running water (later a stream was diverted), the walls streamed with damp in the winter, so that our clothes were not fit to wear in the morning if we did not put them under the bedclothes, and the 'loo' was down the garden: quite an ordeal on snowy nights!" Jean recalls that the whole area was "policed" by the American Army, who had bomb dumps there, including some on the farm.

"They dropped in from time to time for a 'cuppa' and to talk about their families, bringing us a few sweets and even the odd towel. We could never understand how no-one noticed how fat the odd soldier was when he went on duty, only to return slim again - when he had taken off the towel round his waist!" Jean says that Hunts of Earls Colne kindly offered the land girls the use of their squash courts to relax after work. "But they were always too tired to take advantage of it, although we could generally summon up enough energy to go to a dance!"

They all learnt to jive. "To this day, I still have to remember not to jig about on a dance floor," says Jean, who went on to become Mayor of Fylde Borough Council.

"A fruit farm in spring is quite heavenly, particularly at 6 am, but in winter with the trees damp and dripping, it is difficult to stop the wet seeping up one's sleeves, however many layers one wears. "We were forever cycling to the

and tears!

No high life for Peggy as she digs in with land girls



CATHY BROWN
concludes our series
on local Land Girls

BORN in Newmarket, Peggy Moule was "a town girl" with a glamorous ambition: "I was just crazy to go on the stage as a dancer."

"Country girls were those who came into Newmarket on the Saturday buses for shopping," she says.

"Although I knew well what a farm was, and what a cow, or pig or chicken looked like, I could never have imagined that I was destined to work on a farm for five years."

But the outbreak of war when she was just 16 rapidly changed her expectations. Peggy, who has returned to Newmarket in retirement, says that taking part in troop concerts, or dancing on an upturned crate in the middle of a field to amuse fellow land girls was as far as she got towards fulfilling her stage-struck dreams.

As a land girl, she worked on part of Mark Hall Park, destined eventually to be swallowed by Harlow New Town, which was first ploughed up to produce vegetables for the war effort.

"Mark Hall mansion in the park, owned by the Gilbey family, was requisitioned for a Land Girls Hostel, and became the wartime home for many girls and women, mostly from London: the Cockney Girls, we called them," she recalls.

"In all there were about 25-30 Land Army girls working daily on New Hall Farm. The few farm labourers who remained had been exempted from the Armed Forces because of their worthy skills, but the land girls worked alongside them, equal to much of the farm work."

This included tractor driving, working in cow sheds, dung carting with horses, caring for poultry, tree-felling, hoeing, thinning and picking or cutting vegetables and salad crops throughout the changing seasons.

"Winter months were worst of all: up at the crack of dawn and on the farm by 7.30 am. On cold freezing mornings, one could never forget the Brussels sprouts!"

"With thick brown sacks tied around our backs for protection against the wet stalks, icicles would droop from our noses, and one could hardly bear to look up over the back-bending task in front of us, in ankle deep, mud-sodden fields. Often fog blotted out everything. At times we were able to laugh at the hilarity of it all, but some needed to cry."

"We were even human scarecrows at times, walking round and round acres of cabbage fields, in all weather, snow, fog and rain, just to scare off hungry crows and pigeons."

"Treading the silage pit was another



CUTTING A DASH: Peggy Moule with her friend Ruth Linzell when they were in the Land Army in 1945

er weary, almost mind-boggling task I endured for whole days at a time. This was to flatten down underfoot a mixture of straw, molasses, and dried 'pigs' blood', used for cattle feed!"

"However, we were a happy, close knit band of land girls, and I was always ready to entertain in the gloomy moments with some clumsy attempts to dance in the fields, at the same time looking out for the foreman!"

"We all shared our problems, worries and losses, with equal good spirit, and are proud now to say that we all 'done it'."

By the time she left the Land Army, Peggy says, "My dancing days were over. I had already met my future husband. He was a watercress grower."

They had a daughter, and later she went into nursing.

Now retired, she is immersed in com-

munity life in Newmarket. "I keep active," she says: particularly through her involvement with the Pensioners' Association and St Mary's Church.

She also gives talks about her experiences in the Land Army.

Peggy remembers Harlow planners visiting the fields when they were working in 1943, and says the land girls were "horrified to think that this lovely parkland was going to be all houses."

They were still working there when the first flats were being built.

Now she thinks that Harlow is a well-landscaped success, and she is delighted that the little church where they used to shelter from the rain has been kept as a reminder of those days, as the New Town prepares to celebrate its half century.

NEWSDAY



School's concert quickly sold out

PEOPLE who turned up without tickets to the annual Christmas concert in the chapel of the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, this year would have been disappointed.

The popular concert, by the Holbrook Music Society, conducted by the school's musical director Peter Crompton, was sold out well ahead of time.

More than 1,000 tickets were sold in advance, in contrast to previous years when there was a chance of getting a ticket at the door.

Bumper fayre planned

Manningtree is planning a bumper Christmas Fayre for this Friday, with a huge variety of attractions on offer. The town will be closed to traffic from 6pm to 8pm, when a host of entertainers will take to the streets. Father Christmas on his sleigh, the Dixie Jazz Bandits, Spectrum Saxophone Quartet, sword dancers, stilt-walking jugglers and Morris dancers are just part of the festivities. Shopowners dressed in Victorian costume will be distributing mince pies and mulled wine, and the local church choir will sing at 6.15pm.

Raiders thwarted

Raiders who broke into two businesses at Felixstowe got away empty handed because the owners did not leave cash on the premises. Minor damage was caused at Peter Foley's car workshop on the Bridge Road industrial estate and a rear window was broken at the Sandwich Shop, Hamilton Road, in the incidents. A police spokesman said: "The thieves were looking for cash and both premises were thoroughly searched but no money on the premises."

Success on the cards

A Christmas card designed by a seven-year-old Suffolk girl has won for her school £200 worth of education equipment vouchers in a Royal Mail competition.

Hundreds of youngsters across the Anglia region produced designs inspired, like the 1996 Christmas stamps, by the Nativity.

One of the winning designs was produced by Hannah Hinchley of Sprites Infants School in Ipswich and the school was presented with their prize by Ipswich Mail Centre manager James Grime.

Branch welcome

The Lowestoft branch of the Suffolk Pensioners Association was delighted to welcome Trevor Carter, chairman of Waveney District Council, and Bob Blizzard, leader of the council, to its Christmas Party at Stella Maris Hall on Monday night.

About 100 people attended the party and Jim Hodges, SPA public relations officer, thanked all the local firms that donated gifts for the raffle.

Swimming for England

A pupil from Deben High School at Felixstowe has been selected to swim for his country. Phillip Gallagher, a Year 8 student at the school in Garrison Lane, will compete for the English Schools team against Wales, Scotland and Ireland in an international gala next March.

Television taken

A 14-inch TV set, a radio-cassette player, pair of binoculars and cash worth a total of £200 were stolen from a house in Cavendish Road, Felixstowe. The thieves forced a back door to gain entry to the property while the owners were away for three weeks.

Car is attacked

Vandals have attacked a car at the Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, Stowmarket. The car, belonging to a member of staff, had the bonnet damaged and a light smashed at about 8.25pm on Monday night.

Crime by the sea

Burglars stole a TV, video recorder, cash and CDs worth a total of £500 after breaking into a seafront house at Russell Road, Felixstowe.

bathe

nearest WLA second-hand shops for mags, both for ourselves and, albeit discreetly, for the local girls we worked with.

"Sadly, after three years (in between the German and Japanese surrenders) I was invalidated out with tino-sinovitis (repetitive strain syndrome) - but no bandages for me, I was just told to put my hands alternately under hot and cold water taps: 'That's all you can do,' the doctor said."

Jean's time in the Land Army has left her with "happy memories, but a very poor grip, plus a bit of pain after pruning my own apple and pear trees."

She did not return to the "Min of Ag", but became an agricultural journalist, "spending my working life, among other things, walking around fields once again."

Volunteers for the Land Army were the only civil servants who joined up and did not get their pay (£1 a week plus keep!) made up to their salary, she says.

"We got two free rail passes per year, plus our top clothes (no underclothes or civvies) so money was just a little tight! When we were demobbed, we were allowed to keep our overcoats."

"It always makes me laugh when I see a film of a land girl working in her overcoat: they were far too precious for muck-raking, etc. In fact they were very good quality."

"The only stipulation when I left was that they had to be returned for dyeing navy blue. When I got mine back, it was so small, it went as a present to a little boy, so I wrote to The Times protesting."

"My letter wasn't published, but I learned the power of the Press, for the authorities cancelled this demand, and girls were allowed to keep their coats, undyed."

We were even human scarecrows at times, walking round and round acres of cabbage fields, in all weather, snow, fog and rain, just to scare off hungry crows and pigeons.'

second of our series on Land Army girls



GOOD TIMES: Ada Clarke, front row, centre, with colleagues in the Land Army and, below, with her sister Dorothy when they were both land girls



field! Luckily all escaped injury. I remember too coming back from work one day through Wickham Market and seeing a row of rubble that had been cottages when we went by in the morning."

But not all the memories are so grim.

"Thinking back, I enjoyed my time," says Ada. "Life was what you made of it, hours were fairly regular, meals were wholesome – unless you were the unlucky one to get the rabbit's head on your plate on stew night! And once when pepper was mistakenly used instead of ginger in the cake!"

"Social life was fun. Concerts and film shows were brought to the hostel occasionally. Lorries transported us to dances in the area at Army camps, British and American."

Particularly popular was the trip to Orfordness Island: "If the tide was 'right' you couldn't always get back at 10.30pm as was the rule!"

Ada says that as far as the villagers were concerned, there was some "jealousy and derogatory stories", but in general the land girls were welcomed: "There were invitations to WI meetings and individual homes. Several girls – including myself – eventually married local boys."

There was no gratuity when the girls left the land army.

"I was allowed to keep my overcoat, which had been used all of the four and a half years for best and work, also a working jacket we called 'milking coats' and a pair of working boots."

After leaving the Land Army, Ada worked as a cashier at Egertons in Ipswich before returning to Campsea Ashe when she married on Christmas Eve, 1949. Her husband went on to be foreman on the Loudham Estate, so she has remained in contact with the land all her life.

Now a widow, with an adopted son and a grandson, Ada does a lot of work for the church because "people round here were so wonderful when my husband died." She belongs to the Village Produce Association and "the WI, of course" and enjoys knitting and making soft toys. "And I love writing letters!"



NEXT WEEK: THE DANCER WHO BECAME A HUMAN SCARECROW

NEWSDAY



Councillor speaks at special seminar

A MAJOR seminar for people who work with the elderly is being held at Haverhill. The regional event, organised by the Chartered Institute of Housing, will be held tomorrow in the Town Hall Arts Centre. More than 150 delegates are expected to attend the seminar, hosted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Sheila Wormleighton, chair of the council's environmental health and housing committee, will be one of the speakers and will talk about the needs of elderly people living in sheltered accommodation.

New Year music magic

Trianon Music Group starts rehearsal next week for its January 4 presentation of New Year Music Magic at the Ipswich Corn Exchange. Members of the choir and orchestra will be performing music from classics such as spirituals to Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty, and will be including the kind of works for which Trianon is well known. First time local performances of Jaws, Jurassic Park and a brand new selection from The Lion King are included. If you want to know more about taking part then phone 01473 727616. Tickets for the show are on sale now from the Ipswich Corn Exchange (01473 215544).

Cash taken from hotel

Thieves snatched cigarettes and cash from a fruit machine in the reception area of a Suffolk hotel. Raiders struck at the Regency House Hotel in Looms Lane, Bury St Edmunds, between Sunday and Monday, escaping with a large quantity of tobacco and £100 in cash. The cigarettes were taken from a vending machine in the hotel's reception along with money grabbed from the wrecked fruit machine.

Horticultural society

The next meeting of the Woodbridge Horticultural Society will be on Thursday, December 12, at 7.30pm in St John's Hall. Guest speaker for the evening is Audrey Bush, of Woodbridge, who will be demonstrating *Chocolates and Sweets for Christmas*. The competition will be the presentation of four shortbread fingers. Non-members are welcome.

Going medieval

All Saints Church in Great Oakley is to benefit from a Medieval Christmas Fayre this Saturday. The fayre at the village hall lasts from 10am to 12.30pm, and includes all the traditional festive activities and stalls. There will be games, mulled wine, roast chestnuts and Father Christmas.

School fun time

It's Christmas Bazaar time this Saturday at St Margaret's Primary School, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Come along between 2pm and 4 pm for an afternoon of festive fun. All proceeds to St Margaret's PTA.

Top schools swimmer

Gosfield School pupil Alexander Witherspoon from Little Green, Chelmsford, has become Independent Schools' Association national swimming champion for the 50 metres freestyle. Eleven-year-old Alexander also swam in the relay team for East Anglia, which won two second places.

Drink-drive campaign

A short video is being sent to local firms as Suffolk Police launch their Christmas drink-drive campaign. Police want business bosses to show workers the video, which carries the message: "Christmas is a time for giving, not taking."

Unit window broken

Vandals smashed a window at a psychological unit during a night time raid. Damage was caused to the Norfolk County Council office in Elm Road, Thetford, between Monday evening and early yesterday morning. The window will cost £50 to repair.

Bazaar weekend

Elmstead Market Community Centre is hosting a bazaar this weekend. The event on Saturday, which starts at 2pm, has been organised to raise funds for the refurbishment of the centre.

Land Army veterans fight for recognition



NEW BATTLE: above, Evelyn Dixon, from Clacton, wants the Government to recognise the efforts of the Women's Land Army. Inset: Evelyn and friends in Land Army Days

by KATHARINE MAHONEY

AN ESSEX MP is backing a call by Essex "Land Girls" to have the vital role they played during the Second World War officially recognised by the Government.

Clacton Land Girl Evelyn Dixon, 75, is spearheading a campaign to have the efforts of the Women's Land Army (WLA) and Women's Timber Corp (WTC) honoured by the Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson MP.

Mrs Dixon says she is upset and angry at the way their role has been forgotten over the past 50 years. She claims the history books fail to recount how they took on demanding agricultural jobs to produce food for the country during 1939-45.

She said: "Everybody else seems to have been remembered but us. As you get older you see the injustice of it."

"I remember in 1941 when the country was down to six weeks' worth of food because of our ships being bombed on their way back from America. If it had not been for the Girls what would have happened?"

She said they were unhappy about having no documentation to prove they had done the job. All the WLA records were destroyed in 1952.

"The Land Army fights in the fields. It is in the fields of Britain that the most critical battle of the present war may well be fought and won."

Lady Denman, founder of the Women's Land Army during the Second World War

MP backs campaign over vital war role

"We would like the Government to re-write our records and give us a certificate. Something that we can pass on to our grandchildren," she said.

Mrs Dixon joined the Women's Land Army on her 17th birthday in 1939 and served through the war years until November 1945.

Like thousands of other girls she was posted miles away from home and found herself taking on traditionally male agricultural jobs which she was neither trained nor prepared for.

She found herself doing farmwork such as ploughing, felling, picking apples, milking cows,

emptying slurry and spraying fields for just 25 shillings a week.

Mrs Dixon said: "It was a hard life. We were up at 4.30am seven days a week and we could not leave. For two-and-a-half years I did not have a bath."

"I do not regret what I did but I would like to be recognised for keeping the country going as war waged."

Her call is being backed by Harwich MP Ivan Henderson who is asking George Robertson to recognise their efforts.

Mr Henderson said: "Those in the WLA and WTC were issued with service numbers, wore uniforms and were posted to all areas of the British Isles. They played a vital role in this country's war effort and it is only right that they should receive the recognition that their efforts deserve."

LANDGIRLS ON THE FARM ONCE MORE

Kentwell's Landgirls celebrate the work of the Womens Land Army

Formation

The roots of the Women's Land Army lay in the First World War. The labour shortage created by the absence of farm and other workers on military service resulted in the Women's Land Army being born. Recruits were offered the chance to serve in Agriculture, Timber Cutting or Forage sections. By 1918, 23,000 Landgirls (accepted from 45,000 applicants) had been at work. The First World War Women's Land Army was finally disbanded in 1919.

'Landgirls'

In 1939 the second Women's Land Army was officially re-formed. Its recruits were quickly re-christened 'Landgirls' and have been so known ever since.

Recruitment

Recruitment offices opened all over the country in towns and cities, one even in London's Oxford Street. The official minimum age to join was seventeen and a half, but quite often girls of 17 were accepted. The lives of the girls accepted changed abruptly as they left home often for the first time, not always going to ideal working and living conditions.

Training

Girls were trained, at designated training farms and agricultural colleges, for six weeks in milking (hand and machine), animal husbandry, tractor driving, handywork, thatching, hedge laying, timber work and pest control. Some discovered talents and developed great skills. Many employers gave glowing reports of their girls, for example "my girls are as good as any male farm worker, and often much more conscientious".

Uniform - Walking Out

This consisted of laced brown shoes, brown corduroy (occasionally gabardine) breeches, fawn knee-length woollen socks, a smart green v-necked long-sleeved ribbed pull-over over a fawn short-sleeved aertex shirt (a 'dishcloth'), with the WLA tie for formal wear. Topped by a brown felt 'pork pie' hat with the WLA badge on the band. The whole was completed by a good quality melton 3/4 length brown overcoat. For parades and rallies, the WLA armband was also worn on the left arm. The colour reflected each five years of service. Girls also received half-diamond cloth badges to sew on for each six months of service.

Uniform - Working

The Working Uniform consisted of brown dungarees

with matching jacket and served for much of the work. Wellington boots were issued when available, and some girls received leather ankle boots. Extremes of hot, cold and inclement weather led to many unofficial variations of the uniform. This varied from dungarees cut down into shorts for hot summers, to outer layers of unofficial home-knits, scarves, gloves, balaclavas, coats and even old sacks tied round with binder twine!

Accommodation

Landgirls were billeted with the farmers in cottages or, as here, over the Stables or in the Farm Cottage.

The Kentwell Land Army

The girls at Kentwell this weekend are representing various areas of work in which Landgirls were engaged: as tractor workers, horsewomen, stock herds and a ratter. The uniforms worn are originals, owned and collected by those wearing them. Irregularities may be due (as some did) to bucking the trend or because not everyone has managed a full set of kit yet!

Kentwell's Non Land Army Civilians

There is a detachment of the Womens Voluntary Service (WVS) serving tea and jam ~~reads~~ to the workers and meat pies for lunches. Also Home Guard, ARP wardens and sundry others, connected with the farm or not. The military gentlemen are prospecting to requisition the house for the duration of the War.

The Participants

Those taking part in any Kentwell Re-Creation always maintain 'first person' characterisation. For this Landgirls we are basing ourselves in April 1941. Most take part in our Tudor Re-Creations and "caught the 40s bug" when they took part in the 'Kentwell 1945' event. The tractor drivers all belong to a local vintage tractor club.

Kentwell Requisitioned

Kentwell was requisitioned during WWII as a big Transit Camp. In 1995, to commemorate VE Day, we held 'Kentwell 1945' re-creating the Transit camp at the time of VE day. If you would like to take part in any of our events, please write in, with a SAE.

Next Re-Creations

WWII - August 5 & 6; October 14 & 15

Tudor - Easter: April 21 to 24, Children's Tudor

Activities: April 25 to 29; May Day: April 30 to May 1

Whit: May 27 to 29 Great Annual: Jun 18 to Jul 9 WEs

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LONG MELFORD. Kentwell Hall:
Land Girls on the Farm - members of
the Women's Land Army portrayed
working on a war time farm, 11am-
6pm, adults £6.70/children £4.55.

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