

## WOMENS LAND ARMY

1917. W.L.A. formed when there was only three weeks food left in the country. The uniform was woollen breeches, rubber boots, gaiters and long smocks, which looked very un-glamorous. They were joined by schoolboys, soldiers, prisoners-of-war, and interned aliens.

1,000,000 acres extra were ploughed for food and in 1918 another 2,000,000 were ploughed and there were 113,000 members. The only advice they were give was to:

"Dress like a man, but behave like a lady, who expects chivalry and respect from all."

## WOMENS LAND ARMY

1939. W.L.A. reformed in readiness for emergency. 4,000 volunteers in spite of being the cinderella of the forces, i.e. no parades, proper uniform community spirit etc.

lady Denman made Balcombe Place, (her home) available for H.Q. and ploughed up the lawns and used the stables for storage.

The uniform became a fawn hat, green jersey, brown corduroy breeches, black gum boots, fawn overcoats, aertex shirts and green stockings.

The girls did any job on the land and were sent wherever there was a need. They had an annual week's holiday, Sundays off - if possible - and half a day a week besides. There were proficiency tests for them to improve their skills.

By 1945 they all went home with a better understanding of country ways and the farmer's life, but the only way to promotion was by working in gangs.

## WOMENS LAND ARMY

When the W.L.A. were based at Settle they took over Millclose which the West Riding War Agricultural Committee had been using for the men. Mary Donoghue mother was cook and although some girls lived on the farms a lot went out each day and were taught to plough and drive tractors etc., by the men. They became capable of doing any farm job.

The Ministry of Agriculture celebrates a century of helping farmers this year and never more than during wartime. The Board for Encouragement of Agriculture and Improvement was begun in 1793 and lasted until 1822, with £3,000 per annum grant.

There was a Tithe Commission in 1841 and a Cattle Plague Department.

In 1889 a Board of Agriculture was formed to look after the farms in those difficult times. There was a staff of 90 and expenditure of £55,000.

In 1900, fishery matters joined in.

When war broke out in 1914 England was ill-prepared as we were only producing one third of our requirements, so in 1915 the County War Agricultural Committee was formed.

1916 saw the appointment of a Minister of Food who had far-reaching powers.

The Women's Land Army was formed and the Corn Production Bill was passed, giving farmers a guaranteed price for wheat and oats and a guaranteed wage for the workers.

Four million extra tons of grain were produced.

Voluntary rationing did not work so in 1917 ration books were issued.

By 1921 the Board of Trade had taken over the diminishing role of the Board of Agriculture and the Corn Production Acts were repealed.

1929 saw the slump, and a general exodus of people from the country. Food production was kept up by the increased use of fertilisers and pest control, and the marketing boards developed in the 1930's.

Even so, when the second war started England was once again dependent on imports as we were only producing 40% of our needs. The County War Agricultural Committees once more came into force and a "Dig for Victory" campaign started.

After the war the government carried on its policy of keeping a healthy agriculture and in 1946 the National Agricultural Advisory Service was formed.

## ON BRITISH FARMS.

Between 1939 and 1944 the area under the plough in the United Kingdom increased from 12,900,000 to 19,400,000 acres and the output of food increased by well over 70%. In spite of a wartime increase in arable acreage of 70% the number of cows increased by 20% in the West Riding, which is the greatest rhubarb growing county in Britain.

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1889 Board of Agriculture. Staff of 90 and expenditure of £55,000.

1900 Fisheries joined in.

1914 County War Agricultural Committees, to help increase food production.

1916 Ministry of Food - all powerful Womens Land Army. Corn Production Bill gave farmers guaranteed price for grain and the workers a guaranteed wage. 4 million extra tons of grain.

1917 Ration books issued.

1921 Board of Trade.

1942

Cattle prices were:

Roan Heifer	£46-10s	-0d.
Roan Heifer	£43- 0	-0
Red and White	£50- 0	-0
Roan Heifer	£28- 0	-0
Red and White bull	£29- 0	-0
Red Heifer	£26- 0	-0
<u>Roan Heifer</u>	<u>£32- 0</u>	<u>-0</u>
7	£254-10	-0
Av.	£36- 7s	-2d



1942

This year lamb prices were:

12.	H.B. gimmers	£30-6-0.
5		£11-0-0
13		£29-5-0
16		£36-0-0
4		£ 9-17-0
8		£15-8-0-
8		£12-8-0-
6		£ 6-18-0
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71		£151 -2 -0d
	Av.	£2 -1s-11½d each.

12	H.B. wethers.	£30- 9 -6
17		£39-10 -6
20		£37-10 -0
6		£ 7-10 -0
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55		£115 -0 -0
	Av.	£2 -1s.-10d. each

**% of proficiency.**

Ploughing	65%	horse, grooming,
"	73%	service etc.
Haytime	80%	
Harvesting	67%	
Dairying	91%	

"An Army marches on its stomach."

But who fills that stomach?

When all the able-bodied men have answered the call; "For King and Country" it is the disabled, aged and the weaker sex who are left at home to fulfil that duty, and twice this century the same generation have sent the arable land creeping up the hillsides in order to sustain an army and keep the enemy from our shores.

The most useful tool ever invented was the plough and, not by a great scientist but out of necessity. Over the centuries it has been developed but always by the people who were using it, never with government money or scientific research. The greatest improvement was seen when tractors began to be used instead of oxen or horses and the machine could be used twenty four hours a day with only short stops for refuelling and changing drivers.

One man could plough 20 acres a day and use only 60 gallons of fuel instead of walking 11 miles for every acre ploughed with two horses (6 hours)

## PLOUGHING 1939 - 45

Not all the fields were ploughed at the same time. Barton from Clapham came round and said which pieces had to be ploughed and sent a man from the War Agricultural Committee to do it then the Land Army Girls would come and plant it if you couldn't and they would also see to the harvesting as well, but you had to pay, although an allowance of £2 per acre was paid at the time.

Corn, oats, potatoes, turnips and kale were the usual things planted and the seeds were got from Settle Farmers, Thornbers, Lunesdale Farmers etc. Re-seeding was carried out too but quite often the corn didn't ripen so it was put in a heap like silage. A thresher was sent round by the War Ag. for any that was hard enough and Greens at Gargrave had a grass drying plant for the hay but this was too far away to benefit Horton.

Sheep feeding in the days before balers.

Hay was stuffed into hessian sacks, tied to a horse and carried onto the fells.

Huts were sometimes filled with hay in the summer and used when the weather was too wild for travelling.

Clydesdale horses were mostly used on these farms for all work, also some fell ponies.

Jimmy Jackman of Greenfoot, Settle was sent to work for the War Ag. from West Hartlepool where he had been working with horses.

His reference said he was capable of any farm job but he was set on to teach the girls to drive the tractors. Harry Litchfield was the boss and Norman Worsnop, Ted Mudd, Dennis Smailes were mechanics. Harold Steele was the man for Horton parish and Barton who lived at Clapham came round to say which land had to be ploughed.

£2 per acre was offered at one time and Jimmy's wage was £1-18s-6d. ie. £1.92. He remembers cutting green corn and binding it before putting into a heap. The first silage perhaps?

Harry Hartley now living at Marshfield Road Settle, worked haulage and when it got slack he was sent to Settle to work for the War Ag. There was a depot at the station in Settle and one at the papermill at Langcliffe. The office was at Church Street in Settle and the foremen (George Sanderson was one) met there once a week.

Harry drove both the blue and green Fordsons and with two men ploughing they would have five landgirls planting or sowing. These lived in a hostel at Millclose. Barley and oats, potatoes, turnips, rape and kale were grown, but some years the corn grew long stalks and the seeds wouldn't ripen.

Seeds were obtained from Thornbers, Bibbys and Lunesdale Farmers, and some corn was taken to Thornbers for threshing. A threshing (steam driven) machine travelled around the farms.

Fordsons were used in 1917 to increase food production in World War 1 and in 1939 they were the main source of power for food production in World War II. They were simple and cheap to produce and with an adjustable tow bar could pull any machine.

The first ones weighed one ton and had a 20 h.p. engine. These were blue and in 1938 were changed to orange but by 1940 they were all green and stayed so. Mudguards held the toolboxes and helped to prevent them rearing backwards.

Magneto ignition was added which improved the starting and pneumatic tyres became an option to the steel wheels. These weighed 1 1/4 tons and had a 4 cylinder engine, 3 forward gears and 1 reverse and a turning circle of 22' 6". 30 gallons of paraffin would be used in 14 hours to plough 10 acres.

After the war these tractors were fetching £350 average when new ones were costing only £300 but they were so scarce very few people could obtain new.



Shearing, haytime and threshing were times when all the family helped and neighbours helped each other when they had finished their own.

Extra food coupons were allocated at such times and the ladies spent days baking extra bread and pies in readiness.

COPY OF A LETTER SENT BY W. MASON TO  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IN 1940.

"I have no man I can leave in charge who is reliable. I find I have to work long hours in order to keep things in order. I have not applied for discharge. I employ one Italian boy 15 years old."

The boy was Harry Kraffzik who had worked on the sugar plantations in Mississippi. He got £4-10s.-0d. for 2½ weeks less £1-10-0 board and half share of stamps.

These two looked after:

3 horses.  
8 milk cows.  
63 other cattle.  
430 sheep.  
2 pigs.  
20 poultry on 420 acres.

## SPHAGNUM MOSS

This moss grows in great quantities on the moors round Horton and was collected by the ladies in World War 1 for dressings. It is very pure, smells of iodine and absorbs many times its own weight. Naturally deodorant, it can be sterilised and compressed into very small space for transport.

1929 Slump. General exodus of people from the country. Food production kept up by increased use of fertilisers and pest control.

1930's Marketing Boards developed but still only producing 40% of requirements when war broke out again.

1938 County War Agricultural Committees remobilised. Womens Land Army redeveloped. Dig for Victory campaign.

1946 National Agricultural Advisory Service formed in order to keep a healthy agriculture in the country.

Horton Farmers on a coach trip to  
Criccieth Castle, North Wales (1942) ~~1944~~

Back Row:

1.....? 2. Billy Moore. 3. Rose  
Middleton. 4. Mrs. Wolfenden. 5.  
Charlie Wolfenden. 6. Bob Jackson.  
7...? 8. Francis Robinson. 9. Billie  
Lambert. 10. Dick Davies. 11. John  
Wallbank. 12. Bert Morphet.

Middle Row:

1 & 2. Robert and Betty Morphet. 3 &  
4. Tommy and Agnes Rayner. 5 & 6.  
May and Albert Firth. 7 & 8. Mrs.  
and Tid Wilcock. 9. Alan Carr Snr.  
10. Tommy Alderson.

Front Row:

1. Mrs. F. Robinson. 2. Mrs. J. Wood.  
3. Hannah Alderson. 4....? 5 & 6.  
Elsie and Ruth Moore. 7. Hannah  
Davies. 8. Mrs. A. Carr. 9. Mollie  
Jackson. 10. Mrs. B. Morphet.