

the story of wooler hostel

the Eileen Fall ROOM



Eileen was born in Berwick as the daughter of a Freeman. Her Berwick ancestry dates back to the 1500s! She joined the Women's Land Army in 1943, at 18 years of age, and served until 1946.

Initially she had worked in a factory in Coventry, this having followed a period of training in Wallsend, Newcastle. Coventry was bombed: "It was terrible!" She disliked factory work and feeling homesick left to come home. She had to face a tribunal – working for the war effort was compulsory. She decided to join the WRENS; however, there was no requirement so she joined the W.L.A. which, on reflection, she says, "...was good: I was as fit as a fiddle and enjoyed it!"

After working at Stamford Farm at Embleton she was sent to Wooler "where we were well fed and looked after by the warden, Mrs Gray. The other girls were very friendly. Coming from Berwick, I felt very strange at first but soon fitted in."

She experienced working at Roseden, Roddam, Haugh Head and Hetton House before finally being placed at North Doddington Farm. She cycled back and forth to the farm "on a man's rickety bicycle", but sometimes walked. On one particular day, when conditions were particularly muddy, she recalls the local G.P., Dr. Jabor, stopping his car with the invitation to "Jump in, girls!" and he took them back to Wooler. She finally moved out of the hostel into digs at a cottage in Doddington, courtesy of Jim and Jean Hodge.

Her farm jobs included all necessary work for the cultivation of crops: singling 'bagies' (turnips), standing the corn sheaves into stooks, helping with threshing of the sheaves.

The cinema was very popular.

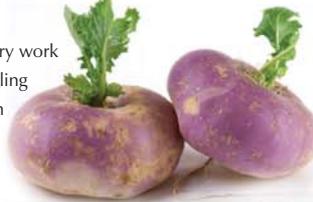


"It was hard work but I enjoyed it, and I got on well with the other farm workers."

Although, sometimes the male workers teased the Land Army Girls mercilessly.

Eileen recalls visiting the cinema in Wooler and the dances at Archibold Hall but generally was too tired to follow other recreational pursuits.

"I recall my time in the W.L.A. as being a happy time; the hard work made me fit and healthy and left me with many memories."



W.L.A. Rally at Alnwick Castle, May 1945. Eileen Fall (2nd left bottom row). Centre left: Lady Gray (Howick Hall) on her left, in centre, Violet Beaver. Also featured: Muriel Liddle and Doris Harkness (Forewoman).

