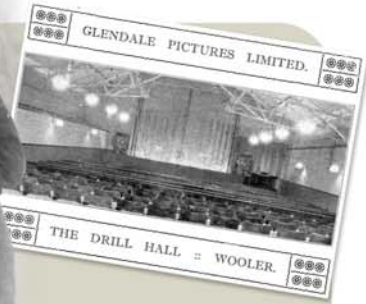


the Land Girls' story



Above: The Drill Hall Cinema, Wooler 1919-1962

Left: Jean Robinson & Ruby Fairbairn

Jean Robinson (née Rochester)

"I was 17 years old when I came to Wooler to join the Land Army from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on 23rd May 1942. We lived in a 60-bed hostel, with showers, dormitories and beds. Mrs Gray was the warden in charge of the hostel. Wooler had German and Italian prisoners of war, and was full of other foreigners. Fowberry Moor Farm required Land Army girls to farm the land and feed the cattle and sheep. We stored grain – it all had to be carried by hand. There was an airfield called Milfield outside Wooler. One winter's night there was a loud explosion. An aircraft had hit a wall, and the pilot was killed. The debris from the plane was still being found years later. The American forces had more money than the English soldiers and were more generous with the girls. We were very fit, with the physical work. We had to be in by 10pm and rise by 6am. Food was very basic – potatoes, mince, veg. – some farms fed us with turnips and ham. I was not really aware of the war because of my youth. It was a happy time of my life. I stayed in Wooler and have been there since 1942. I am 80 years of age."



Hilda Humpherson (née Jackson)

"I went to work age 14 in Wooler doing domestic work. I was called up for the Land Army in 1944, and I went to a farm at Learmouth, near Cornhill on Tweed. There were four other girls in a cottage – I was the only one from the country, the rest were from the town. We had to cycle a mile to the farm, starting at six in the morning, had an hour for our lunch and finished at five. We had our meals made for us, but had to cycle back to the cottages for them.

We did all sorts of jobs. Like singling turnips, threshing, stoking, making hay pikes, gathering potatoes, feeding stock. It was quite easy for me but not for the girls from the town. Some of them couldn't carry on and they went home.

I was there for four years until 1948. Then I got married – my husband came home then – he had been at Dunkirk, in Africa and Italy."



Group, from top left: Les Lowrey, Edith Hall, Tommy Swan, Jenny Swan, Violet Carr and Bobby Curry.



Above: 'Freddy Tisben & His Band', all German Prisoners of War.



Background: Agnes Perrett haymaking.

