

the story of wooler hostel

Below:
Betty Robinson (left)
and Violet Carr.



Violet Carr (née Beevor) originated from Whitley Bay. From memory, she joined the W.L.A. in about 1941. Before coming to Wooler she was based at Kielder, where she worked in the forestry department. The men previously employed there had been called up to joined the armed services. At first she didn't really like the life there but became used to it. Violet worked there for two years during which time she was involved with working in the nursery, sorting trees for planting. She recalls having to carry the saplings to the sites where the girls then planted them. There were only four or five girls at that location. At first they had a cook to prepare their food but later the girls took it in turns to cook for themselves.



the Violet Carr ROOM

Violet had heard of Wooler from a friend, who had earlier visited the area for walking trips. She took up courage to ask for a transfer and much to her amazement this was granted. It was arranged and a letter stated: "... to start work at farms in the district of Wooler for the War Agricultural Committee on Monday, 17th July 1944... Living accommodation will be provided for you at the Y.W.C.A. W.L.A. Hostel, Cheviot Street Wooler". Once there she liked it very much – after all she'd wanted to be there – and stayed in the area until after the war, eventually marrying her husband, Sandy, in 1951.

Wooler hostel was to be her new home. Initially, when sent out to work on the farms, she would join a group of more experienced land girls to learn some of their skills. She admitted she "Hadn't a clue about farm work!" She recalls a forewoman called Doris who would send the girls out to various farms as and when they were required by individual farmers. However, Violet was based on the same farm for most of the time – Bewick Folly – and remembered the farmer Mr Oliver Hall. She recalls being involved with a variety of jobs. The farm had pigs, sheep, cows, and poultry. Horses were kept because, although tractors were now in use, there might have been a shortage of fuel. The farm had its own threshing machine. She was involved with harvesting, threshing singling of turnips, feeding of animals, etc.



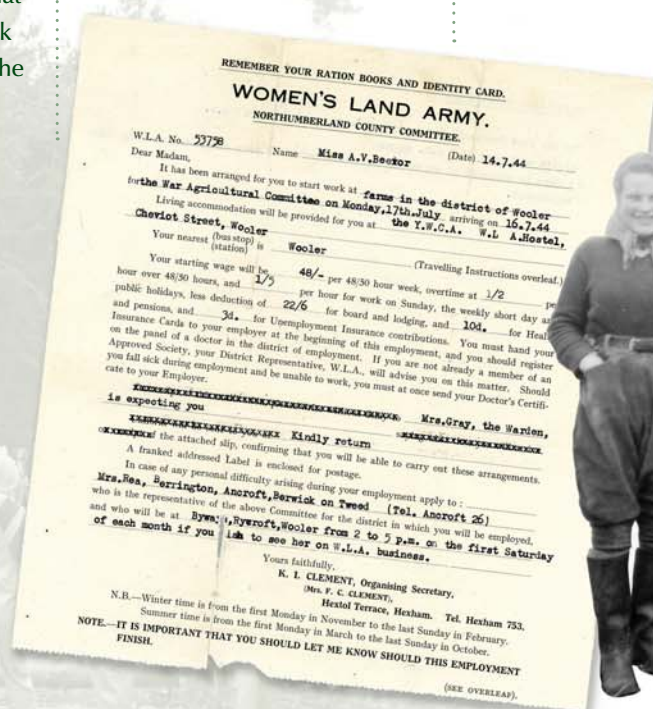
Left to right: Bobby Curry,
Jenny Swan, Muriel Whillis
and Violet Carr.

At Wooler hostel she recalls being well looked after; it was clean and they were presented with good food, there being a greater variety in the country than in the town. However, she admits being a 'fussy eater' and was a little wary of the content of their 'pot-luck', lunch-time sandwiches. These were put into tin boxes the night before.

Sometimes if, in bad weather, the hostel became muddy or wet the girls were called upon to help with the cleaning – many hands made light work! (A designated cleaner was normally employed.)

Transport to the particular farms was provided by a van, driven by one of the girls. However, sometimes they were taken by wagon; this would have been driven by a 'D.P' (a displaced person). She recalls a driver, 'Taffy' Swain, from Poland, who after dropping girls at the appointed farm would remain at the last one to work there himself before doing a reverse round to collect them at the end of the day.

Then it was home again and often a visit to the family of her then boyfriend, and husband to be.



Below:
Nancy Bland (left) and
Violet Carr.

