

New Forest Remembers WWII Project

Oral History Team: Transcription Document

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00:00:00

So I'd like you to tell me your name and what you did during the War.

I'm Alice Hoare and I worked on a farm with the Land Army, for the Land Army, at Godwins Croft and we did...oh I don't know (laughs).

Could you tell me a little bit about what it was like at Godwins Croft? (repeats question twice).

Oh it was hard work at first because of course you knew nothing about that kind of thing, you know. Well I did know about it but I hadn't done it like that. I did some hedge trimming, I know for one thing, all along the main road from (00:00:46) Cut Cross to Cat and Fiddle, not right across, but to the woods. And then there was harvesting and haymaking and all that sort of thing to be done. Beetroot to be pulled up and sent to the railway stations, you know, to go off for sugar beet, to sugar beet rather. And ...oh...haymaking, harvesting, hedge trimming, milking cows, getting up early (laughs). We did the milking first thing in the morning and then we went home to breakfast, then came back and we had to clean all the cow pens out and make sure that they were all clean, ready for the afternoon milking again. We had to also put the milk ready for (00:01:51) Maundry and Parsons dairies at that time. So much in each churn and it had to be level with a marker. And then they came and picked it up while we were there in the mornings. And we had to, as I say, wash all the buckets and everything up, had to be sterilised. Well actually I did enjoy it. I mean I didn't hate it at all, I really enjoyed that work. Then of course in the afternoon, before the milking, you went out

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and helped with all sorts of jobs, like cutting kale and all that sort of thing for the cows.

How many of you was there working on the farm?

What, with me?

Yeah.

No Land Girls, only me and the farmer. That was the first farm I was on, there was only the farmer and another man, dairyman, that was there, you know. The farmer did the carter work you know, horse work and that. And that's, yes, where they got me on a load of hay. I had to load the hay up, starting at the bottom, and work it round the edge of the cart. Then we built it up. When you got the top, you were up the top and you had to get down. Well, they wouldn't let me get down. They threw a rope up over and then I had to slide down, but they were going to take me - they were going to take me back on top of the load (laughs) with nothing to hang on to.

00:03:55

No, that was that time and then I went from there to Waterditch, because my family moved to Waterditch Farm, and the owner there he took me over as a Land Army girl. I did more dairy work there then...there was quite a few cows wasn't there Sally? (addressed to friend Sally who is present at interview). It was about forty I think we had, wasn't it, something like that? And of course there again you had to go up in the mornings and get them down from the fields for milking. Then you had to milk the cows, you know, and then they had to be taken out to another field. And then come back, have your breakfast then you went out again and you had to clear all the cow pens up. And it was on that farm that the boss's wife came out to see me and she said, "Alice" she said, "I could eat my breakfast off that floor". So that gave me a great encouragement that did (laughs). We had a really old cow there, Fairy, and she had...they gave me the day off and I couldn't understand why I had the day off. And when I got back she was out in the rickyard on her own, and I said to them, "Why is she out there" and they said, "Oh she's had an operation". And you know they had got hoofs like that, well she had had one of them taken off. They didn't want me to see it so they gave me the day off. But she was alright, she recovered lovely. I had to milk her out in the rickyard and she knew that when she was well enough to come back in, she didn't want to come in, she wanted to stay out there (laughs). Because it was summertime. But eventually she got back in again, but she always stayed back with me at the end of the line when I got the cows in. She was always the last one. Well she was getting on, you know, and she was very slow at walking then but she was a lovely old thing that Fairy was, yeah. What else can I ...

I'm interested to know what your food was like on the farm, your breakfast and were you short of food or things?

Oh no, because on the farm I mean you had eggs, you had milk. You know we were lucky really, because when you realised what other people didn't have, you know. And eggs and all that were quite plentiful. Yeah we were lucky, very lucky there. I'm lost for words at the moment (laughs).

I'm interested to know what you knew about the War itself while you were there.

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Well, we had air raids. I slept through a lot of them at night. They told me next morning, "Oh we had an air raid last night" (laughs). And then at one time I worked for a lady in Burley Road and that was during the first part of the War and I had to...that was before I went into the Land Army, sorry. And I had to...she wasn't very well when I took her over, you know. I looked after her and got her to... She was almost ...couldn't walk or anything you know, but we got her going lovely. We went to Bournemouth with the taxi from Bramsgore. We went to Bournemouth and had lunch and back again. That was once a week we did that. She got on fine. By the time I left her, because I had to leave because I was eighteen and had to go into Services, and she could walk and everything for herself again. I was really pleased with that, you know, yeah. She was a very sick lady, yeah. Now, where have I got to now then?

It would be interesting to know if you had any involvement with the troops or anything, if you saw any of the troops that were around, the soldiers and things?

Well not normally, no. We only just went up there and had a chat to them and back again but we didn't know a great lot about them, no. They were on Sopley Camp weren't they?

Sally: It's no good asking me, I'm not that old.

I think they were on Sopley Camp. They had the RAF there I think. I'm not sure, I think it was the RAF.

Sally: Yeah Sopley Camp was the RAF.

Because they had the houses, didn't they, they lived in the houses there. I mean, apart from that no, I don't know anything about them.

I wonder if you could tell me if you made any friendships during the War?

Well just my husband, or my boyfriend then, I wasn't married to him (laughs). That's about all, no.

How did you meet him?

Well his sister also worked at the farm where I was at. His sister, she took me home, I went home for her eighteenth birthday. And that's where he came in, ten o'clock at night, "Oh who are you?" And I told him. And he said, "Oh are you just going just then, back home then, to Waterditch?" And he said, "Oh", he said, "I'll take you home". And that was it, that was how it all started, yeah. Well I suppose it was about a year we got engaged and that was on ... it was a very funny thing, I hope this is all right (laughs). We bought the ring in Boscombe and he said, "If I take it home, mother will find it" he said, "and she'll want to know when we're going to get married and this, that and the other". So he said, "Oh go on, put it on your finger" he said, "and we'll take it from there", you know. So that's what we did. So I got engaged at Waterditch, on the bridge, (laughs).

What did he actually do? What was his role in the War?

He was a lorry driver for Green Line transport. So that was how it first started. So then we got

married the following year, on the same day, well one day different. It was October 20th. Yes, as I say we had to live in one house and sleep in the other one. Eventually the lady where we slept, she moved to Derrit Lane and we took over the cottage. There was no water, no electric, we had a tap out in the shed, there was nothing indoors, earth toilet. But we had nine years there and I had Tim there, my son. But it was hard work because there was nothing easy, you know. Oh yes, and I had a paraffin heating cooker. Caught fire didn't it (laughs). I was expecting Tim and the funniest, luckiest, thing was, the man that bought the paraffin walked in the door just as it happened so he pulled it out for me. Otherwise I don't know what would have happened, because I couldn't have pulled it out because it was too heavy, yeah.

00:12:20

Do you remember the end of the War?

The end of the War? (Pauses) Oh golly. I'm just trying to think. D'you know, it's gone completely. (Pauses) The end of the War.

It's OK, don't worry. (Switches off). I wonder if you can tell me if you remember how you found out we were at war, when war was declared?

Yeah because I was in service for Lady Tottenham and she came down and told us to put the radio on and listen as there was a big announcement coming up. And that was when we heard that the War was declared, yes. The 3rd of September I think was it? That's not bad is it? (laughs)

What was it like knowing that, about it?

Well I mean I was lucky. I had a good boss, you know, she was really lovely. I mean we had everything we could have, you know, that was necessary - she was really good, yeah. Oh yes, also we had...yeah that was which one...I went to Christchurch to the pictures. When I got back the warden was waiting for me. I'd locked my door but left the light on, and they couldn't get in to switch the light off. That was funny (laughs).

Was that during the War?

That was when the War started, yeah, yeah. That was one thing that happened, yeah, so they couldn't get in to put the light out, yeah. I got slightly, not told off, but just politely told not to let it happen again (laughs).

Were there lots of changes when the War started?

Well as I say I was lucky, you know, everything was fine for me, yeah. She was a very good lady, yeah, she really was. When I got married she came to church and saw - to- my wedding. But she lived opposite then, she'd moved and lived opposite the church, and to my surprise she was in the church when I walked up the aisle to get married. And when I came out she presented me with a stool made by the Red Cross.

When was it you actually got married?

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At Burton, Burton Church.

When was it?

Down towards Christchurch.

No sorry, you mis-heard me – when was it?

October the 20th, 1945.

At the end of the War, just after the War. Can you remember what it was like after the War in the area?

Er...I'm not ... oh golly.

Did things change at all after the War? Were there still shortages and things?

I'm stuck there (laughs).

I wonder if you would be able to tell me if you met up, or knew, any other girls working in the Land Army?

Well we used to have meetings now and again and we would have an evening get together, you know, dancing and all that sort of thing. And then they would come and pick you up and take you back to wherever you were at night, you know you had transport for that. That's about it, yeah.

Do you know what you did during the evenings, what kinds of things did they do in the evenings?

Well I think it was just a case of dancing and normally get together, you know. I was trying to think if there was any men there, but I can't think! (laughs)

Sally: Where did you have the meetings?

Well it was Lyndhurst or Brockenhurst way, that way. I can't remember where it was exactly.

Thank you for that. Could I just ask you to introduce yourself?

Yes, I'm Alice Hoare.

And can you tell me about what you were doing at the start of the War?

Yeah, I was in service, for Lady Tottenham at Burton. I was there for three years and then I left and, well I had to leave. I went up to Bramsgore and did a year's work with an elderly lady, and then I was eighteen and I had to go into one of the Services of some sort, so I chose the Land Army.

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When did you become a Land Army girl?

19...? I've got to think how old I am now (laughs). '22 I was born so I was eighteen, so it was '40, '40 yeah.

Out of interest, why did you choose the Land Army?

Well I think my family were all land workers, so I knew what it was all about, you know, yeah. So I think that's why I chose the Land Army, yeah.

Thank you very much.

Ends: 00:18:47

Keywords: Land Army, sugar beet, Sopley Camp, Green Line transport, Black out, Air Raid Warden

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| 00:00:00 | | | | |
| <i>Thank you very much. You said that you've got a funny story?</i> | | | | |
| Oh yes (laughs). I've forgotten what it was! | | | | |
| <i>Friend Sally prompts: Collecting sticks for lighting the fire.</i> | | | | |
| I used to go down to the farm and pick up sticks to take back to light the fire for the steriliser. And when I went down I was alright but when I came back, the cock would used to pitch into the back of my legs and peck my leg...yep...how's that? | | | | |
| <i>Thank you very much (Alice laughs).</i> | | | | |
| Ends: 00:00:35 | | | | |

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