Australian War Memorial

Sound Collection

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

ACCESSION NUMBER: S02751

TITLE: Pat Searl as a member of the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA).

INTERVIEWEE: Pat Searl

INTERVIEWER: Sue Maslin

RECORDING DATE: 13 November, 1985

RECORDING LOCATION: Devonport, Tasmania

SUMMARY:

TRANSCRIBER: ***WRITE*people**
TRANSCRIPTION DATE: February, 2004

Pat Searl as a member of the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA), 1942-1945, interviewed by Sue Maslin on 13 November, 1985 at Devonport, Tasmania.

If we could start by my asking you a little bit about your life prior to joining the Land Army and where you grew up?

I lived in Hobart all of my days. We did live on little bits and pieces roundabout in different areas and then when I grew up and left school, which was in Victoria, my main thing was to grow - I didn't have any profession - just have a block of land and grow flowers. Or sometimes I used to grow flowers in my mother's garden and do a vegetable garden. But my main thought was to have a little garden, grow flowers for sale, which never eventuated because the war came.

And what was your father doing?

My father was a doctor. First of all he was a little local doctor in a country area and we lived there and then he was in the City Health Department. He was in Parliament for a while, but he was a doctor. Very good at delivering babies.

And what sort of things would your mother be doing?

My mother was just at home. She'd reared three children.

How many were in the family?

There were three girls in the family. She was just at home until the war when she joined the Red Cross. Oh, that's about all.

So you went away to boarding school?

I went away to boarding school when we were 14. My elder sister and I went, Barbara, and I went. She went first for a year and then I went. We were only at school, it was kind of to finish us off a bit and to get us to know the Melbourne people so that when we grew up we had the Melbourne people. Although now and even soon after that I don't seem to have connected up with any of the Melbourne ones I know. Barbara does, she knows some people and her friends do come to Tasmania and of course we both meet up together.

And so you left school when you were how old?

I left school at about 18, 17, because the infantile paralysis - those days it was infantile paralysis - were buzzing round Tasmania and my father as the Health Officer didn't want to get me stranded in Victoria and not be able to come back to Tasmania without being quarantined. And so I left at an early age, earlier than we would have normally. And my mother was thought to fill in my time that she would get different people

to teach me. I had to learn different things such as elocution in those days. Oh, different things. I think I went to a home craft place and we learned a bit of cooking, you know, and domestic work, and that filled in the time.

And at what point did you first hear about the Land Army or land work?

When they first started to talk about it that they would start the Land Army.

How did you first hear about it? Did you know some of the women involved?

I knew some of the ones organising that were in it. Such as Dorothy Ratcliffe and Margaret Horsen and they were going away and I joined up just as a casual labour because I didn't at that stage want to go away. I didn't like the idea of going away, that I'd do casual work round the city and that's what I did.

So this was in April 1940 when you first got involved?

That was about it. That was about it. And they had a little office in Hobart where Coles is now in Liverpool Street, Hobart and then they moved down to down nearer to the wharf, funny little place there. And by the way, I forgot to tell you before that they did have

little evenings where somebody would come and lecture us or we'd have a little meeting in the evening. But in those days nobody seemed to worry about walking down the street to a meeting from your home or anything and be grabbed like you would these days.

These meetings were when you first joined?

Yes, and there was just half a dozen of us. And Miss Hodgeson or one of them.

Who would actually take the lectures, would Miss Hodgeson?

No, she'd get in occasionally not too many lecturers; it was more a talking meeting I think. They were agricultural people, horticultural people; agricultural people were very interested in us.

So during these first weeks were you actually in some soft of training?

No, we'd just go out. They'd say, they'd ring up Miss Hodgeson and say, "Well can we take a few of the girls down to Margate, we want to weed pyrethrum" or one of these drugs. And we'd meet at the office, I think it was, and they'd take us down in our old clothes and you'd take your lunch and we'd weed stuff all the day. I don't know what time we went, I suppose about nine. And then we'd come back. I don't think we went ever

day. I think they picked their days and we'd have to report to the office now and again and they'd say, "oh well", or once we got going with the agricultural people they'd say, "What about going on Thursday?", or "What about going a different day?".

What was the pyrethrum used for?

Drugs. I don't know what, it was drugs. I think it might still be. You know, today. But then they'd have all kinds of things and we'd just go out into the city for it. We'd also spend some time at the agricultural place where the chooks are. And I was thinking we also went, I went, but only about two or three of us went, and we weeded gladioli on Mr Ratcliff's property out of the city a bit. Remember Dorothy Ratcliff? Her father was very interested in growing gladdies for shows and goodness knows what. He's got a son up here in the Devonport area and he does the same thing. Dahlias and bulbs, he grew bulbs.

So did the work involve things that perhaps weren't essential war production at that stage?

Yes, the thing was employed labour. Manpower, where they couldn't get somebody to weed the ground, they'd have us. We also did a bit of weeding asparagus and that was outside of Hobart at a place, Sorell, and the wife used to teach music and the old husband was there. We'd weed asparagus, or we'd often go and pitch a tent

and we'd go for a weekend. We'd have a kind of a get together camp and we'd weed the asparagus. I don't remember ever bringing asparagus home, but I do remember Mr Ratcliffe giving us a bunch of bulbs or a bunch of gladdies. I don't know whether it was gladdies, I don't think it was gladdies. I think it is, bulbs, he grew bulbs. Daffodils, and the rejects, he'd give you a bunch to take home.

What were you doing at the poultry farm? Was that the Department of Agriculture?

Yes, cleaning them out and collecting the eggs. We used to collect the eggs and they were all numbered and it all had to be recorded and I don't know whether we cleaned the fowl pens out. I don't remember if I cleaned the fowl pens out. But I also, out in Newtown, was at another fowl poultry place and that was just for wholesale work. It wasn't so technical as the agricultural place. And then - did Betty Campbell tell you? -When we were at the agricultural place, they also had a horticultural place attached to it and we did a lot of work there thinning plants out into boxes and things. She probably told you about that. She was there for a long time because she didn't go away.

And in these days what uniform were you wearing?

Boiler suits. Boiler suits and overalls. I think we might have gone to work in overalls. But the uniform

itself was boiler suits. Ghastly turn out. Dreadful things to get out of on a cold day. I think we must have worn overalls.

And you had to buy these yourself?

Yes, and we were paid seven and sixpence.

A week?

A week. Seven and six a week, yes.

Who were you paid by? The individual farmers?

The individual farmers. I don't know what we got when we went out to Newtown. I think Newtown was a case of we went every day. We did when we came back from the war. When we went there we were going every day. I suppose we did when we went the first time.

So you had your boiler suit and you had what on your head?

Brown berets without a top to it. Just a brown beret and a brown belt, rather like a strap, a nice mess.

The brown berets sound a little bit like Guiding or Brownies.

Yes, and then they decided to drape them up a bit so we wore a brown tie for occasions.

Would you ever have to go out publicly in your uniform?

Yes, in that. We went to the church at the cathedral. We went for a parade and I don't think we had our ties on, we didn't have the belts on. We went down the street, Macquarie Street into Saint David's Cathedral, the Church of England one, and we had these brown berets and these ghastly boiler suits and it poured with rain and you can imagine what we looked like by the time we got there. And we'd just go out in those. You'd have to have them freshed up, of course.

How many other girls were working with you at this stage in this initial group of the Land Army?

I should imagine about half a dozen to a dozen. We'd go about in one car. There'd be a certain lot that you'd always meet up with, we were always friends. I was very friendly with Betty Campbell, used to go and see her privately as well. But I didn't know her till we joined the Land Army.

And were the other girls from backgrounds as similar as your own?

No, I don't think mine, mine was a more of a social kind of a family besides a lot of the others, but I mustn't be snobby. But I'm different to the rest of the family. I like the outdoor life.

So what sort of backgrounds?

Campbell, as we used to call her, she was in a little shop to begin with wasn't she, or something?

A milliner.

Yes, and she did that kind of thing, but I was just at home.

What about girls that had come off farms or were most of you from Hobart?

We were mostly from Hobart in those days. But they occasionally would have the ones from the farms. They'd have the ones from Richmond were quite often with us, they'd come in. Or we'd go out, they'd have a field day and we'd go out, we'd be taken out by the agricultural people. Or in a bus.

So you would meet up with other Land girl who were on the farms?

Oh yes, we'd meet up, yes, they'd have these outings now and again and you'd meet everybody, whether you knew them, whether you don't.

So you did that kind of work for about 12 months?

Yes, and in the middle of this I did go to, they thought I might like a little bit of training - or I was itching by this stage to get out - and I did go to Richmond where I did a bit of training. They were social people and I didn't do terribly much but I was in the dairy, the dairy and the pigs. They went in for pigs. But there's was a little, they didn't care about farming or training a girl or anything. But they took me on and kindness of the Land Army.

So what was your work?

I learnt to milk cows there. And don't really honestly don't remember much about it. But I was there for six weeks. And we did know the people before hand.

Were you the only Land girl there?

Yes, and then I came back and went on with the others the same till we went to Cressy.

Where were you living during all this time?

At home. And my sisters and my mother were very Red Cross minded.

I was wondering what your family felt about your involvement in the Land Army?

They didn't mind. They were very keen that I did something. I think my mother was probably horrified to think that I was going in the Land Army, but I don't really think she minded. They were all wrapped up in Red Cross. She was one of the head chiefs as one of those books will say at one stage and she used to tour around a bit too. She toured all around Tasmania. And my sisters were in the Red Cross and then they had their social activities, they were happy. My father went up in Puckapunyal one of those places in Victoria with the medical profession. And so really I would have been the odd one out in Hobart. But Mum took it for granted when I appeared in dirty old overalls or something. And so that's how it went.

Did you ever they think that you might want to join one of the other Services?

No, because I wasn't brainy enough in those days to worry about the other Services. The Land Army was the thing for me, the outdoor life.

So at the end of this time you went off to Cressy. Can you tell me about how it felt leaving home for the first time to go off to Cressy?

Well, I'd already been to boarding school. Oh no, we went off. We were adventurers, wanted to, you know, set foot in it.

So by this stage you were happy to leave? You were saying before that you didn't really want to leave.

Oh yes, get sick of round about Hobart. And oh yes, we were adventurers and we were a bit interested to join.

And you were telling we you were amongst the first group?

Yes, I wonder where I've got it? I wonder if Jo's got the one of us standing on the by the home where we lived cutting the different one's hair. That was a good photo. Yes, I was quite happy to go to Cressy and get started.

And can you tell me about you first arriving at Cressy and the sort of things that would happen?

When we first arrived we, of course, arrived by train from Hobart. We were met on a lorry - truck in those days - and we were all taken and mixed up together.

And well, you see, some of them at Cressy took to the farming and some didn't. We had one woman - Jo might have told you - a Mrs Foley that wasn't suitable at all. And wasn't not only suitable in the farming she was too old, she was older than the rest of us and she just, I don't know what she did, but they had to push her out of it. I think she was quite, shouldn't say so, quite with it. She had to be taken right away from it. But, oh no, we settled in and you see Miss Hodgeson they didn't know how it was going to go. You see we'll hear from Mrs Thomas, she'll tell us more about it. And we were all fresh and fresh new building and fresh new everything. And we gradually settled into it.

So what sort of things would you be doing there during the days?

What did Jo say? We did farming, I think we might have milked cows and we used to feed the animals out on a truck. I don't know whether it was a truck or horse and cart. I've got a photo somewhere about where I did scarifying there and hay making and general farming. But it was farming in the agricultural college - that was Cressy Research Farm - and it wasn't really till you got out that you had say practical farming, practical work on a farm.

And what were the hours like there at Cressy?

I think we worked from 8 till 5 then we had the time off. And we'd walk into Cressy. Did Jo tell you that? We'd walk into Cressy and I suppose we went to the pictures and we looked at the shops on the weekend. But I do remember we did go - a river ran through the farm - and we used to go fishing for eels. I don't know whether we fished, I don't know how you go about that. But we did get eels and we'd have a little picnic by the beach and all the rest of it. Not the beach, the river, in the evenings. I don't think we were really attached to the males. I mean I don't they think they came near us much. I don't know how Jo got her, I suppose he was working on the farm, wasn't he? But we didn't get, you know, attached to them like we did with Sassafras. We used to have the locals up to visit us at Sassafras.

And how much contact would you have with the local community at Cressy?

Nothing I don't think, I don't think ever.

Would you go to people's places on the weekend?

No, no, no, I didn't. Oh, not in Cressy. I used to go to visit people on the big properties. We knew them, we'd always known the people. Or they knew the acquaintances of my family and I'd go and go for Sunday lunch kind of affair. They'd come and get me in a car and I'd go out for lunch on a Sunday, or I did have a

girlfriend there that went to school in Melbourne with me. And she'd come and get me. Not terribly often but I did go out. And I presume we went to Hobart for weekends, occasionally.

And what about local dances?

I don't remember the local dances at Cressy. I don't ever remember going to a local hop there.

How many girls do you think would have been at that place?

I don't know, about a dozen. About a dozen I suppose.

And where abouts were you camped?

At Cressy?

Oh, they had their own hostel and it was in two buildings. And the bed, the place that they had rigged up for the sleeping accommodation. On one end they had windows that opened and gosh, like a prison from the road, I think you can see it from the road, I windows were high up, right up on top. And you never saw out that way. I think they were economising, war economy. High up and then you didn't see anything out, and then on one end they had a window that opened, dreadful, and very cold looking really, war time, no carpet. I don't know whether we didn't have to take our own bedding?

Perhaps we didn't. But it was very cold looking and then it just had the showers, or the baths. I don't know if we had showers in those days and we just had that. And in another building there was a cottage and the - what did she call herself? - the cottage mother lived and she had a common room there, and a small dining room, I suppose it was. I can't remember. Don't know whether we ate in the same room, might have all in one room, and a kitchen and her bathroom. And we'd taken turns to help. Oh, you'd have a day in the house. I don't know, so often, and you'd help in the house preparing the food and, yes, you'd go in for meals. Preparing the meals and doing the washing up and you did this all the time. I presume we did our own washing but where the sheets went to, heaven knows. I don't remember us doing washing. I presume we did though.

> And what was it like for you living and working together in a group like that?

Oh, it was all right. You got used to it. But Madge Murray, she was really was, I don't know where she lives, but she was really amusing and she really kept us amused with all her little chatters and a funny squeaky creaky voice. Somebody's got a photo of her, I don't know if it's me in there, but she really was funny, and of course Jo, we really were attached to Jo.

And what sort of things would you do at the end of a day when you'd knocked off for recreation and so on?

I'd lie in the bed, I think. Lie in your bed, I don't know what else we did. We'd go for a picnic now and again. I think they put the hay bales on the truck and we'd sit up on that. Occasionally we'd go to Cressy at night and you'd come back in the truck.

What would you be doing at Cressy at night?

Well, the shops would we open and we'd go along to the shops. I suppose it was daylight or they'd come back and we'd sing along in the truck. And a lot of them, I don't know whether when I went back again I took my bike back, and we used to ride bikes along the road. It was all very quiet though, of course.

So by this stage, had you been issued with another uniform?

No.

You were still in the boiler suits?

We were in… oh, we've skipped the bits about me going to Saint Leonards, haven't we?

Well, when did you go to Saint Leonards? Was that before Cressy?

That was before Cressy, yes, sorry about that. We were in jodhpurs by the time we went to Cressy.

So what did that uniform consist of?

That uniform consisted of khaki shirts, which we provided. And jodhpurs - any colour you like, any colour that you could get, and green ties and a green hat, felt hat. And these green jumpers with a V-neck that you made yourself and you were lucky if the dyes matched. You usually got them pretty well but sometimes you'd get a stripe across your middle or something.

Why would that happen?

Because the dye would be wrong, the number of the dye and they weren't so good at matching the dyes up. And the bands of the jumpers you quite often used to have machine knitted so it was firmer and so we had those and brown shoes or brown elastic sided boots. We quite often wore elastic sided boots. But there, you had to buy those at your own expense. And what did we wear as a coat? Oh no, that was how it went but I think if it was wet you'd fold up your raincoat or something.

So, did you think that the training period that you were there for was useful?

Yes, I think it was, Sue, and I think the longer period. You see, coming from the city - the majority of us came from the city - we'd have to have quite a bit of training with it, although, as I say once you got out on the farm it was more practical because you'd have to learn to do things. You didn't have all the most modern equipment that you have at Cressy.

So you thought Cressy did have much better conditions and modern equipment than on most of the farms you were going to?

Yes, yes, see I wasn't… oh, I suppose we did do a bit of farming at Cressy. When you see those photos of people doing disc ploughing and all. And I must have learnt to harrow a bit because the first farm I went on to was the one for six weeks when I did only harrowing so I must have been able to drive a horse somewhere.

Well, just going back to Saint Leonards then. So this was a bit of time before you went to Cressy? How long were you at Saint Leonards for?

For about a week, I think, it must be in my scrapbook, about a week. And we were taken all over the place there. We went to the woollen mills and out to see

different tractors. They must have had a field day there, I think, and the Forestry Department at Perth where we saw all the different trees and we were told, of course, how they'd make wind breaks and all this. And they weren't only the city girls – a lot of them came from farms, off their own properties to learn, you know, modern things.

How big was the camp, then?

I think there were only about eight or nine there. A lot came from Richmond in Tasmania. I remember that. It's a long way back, Sue, you know, how can I remember all this? Oh yes, we enjoyed it there.

And who was organising that camp, was it Miss Hodgeson?

Miss Hodgeson or they had a Gwen Heskith there and she was something to do with the Guides and she actually ran the camp. And Miss Hodgeson I think only came up now and again. I don't think she was there full time. She arrived to stay and it was in a private house. And the woman, Mrs Ransome, she was very interested in it and I think she was one at the very beginning where it started with Mrs Thomas.

She was one of the women …?

The original starters. She had a daughter that was very interested in it. But they lived in just a little ordinary little house in Saint Leonards.

So you would go out and view different aspects of agriculture. Were you actually doing any work, any physical work?

No, the only little bit we did was a community effort where we did the church grounds. And I think we wore jodhpurs when we went there.

And then you went back to Hobart?

Yes, and carried on these casual jobs and they decided to take us to Cressy. Cressy, they were always talking about going to Cressy. But I don't think we got the actual uniform until we got to Sassafras. We were in our jodhpurs then.

So whether you left Cressy, where was your first placement?

It was Westbury, just this side of Westbury, where I harrowed for six weeks and that's all I did, way back in the bush.

And what did that involve? Was it horse drawn?

Horse drawn, yes, horses. I presume I had three or four horses. Might have been one; one was terribly hard to deal with. And my greatest delight was to be put - because I'd know when Miss Hodgeson or somebody was going to come up in this area in the train - and my great thought was to be put in a paddock very close to the railway so that when they went by I'd give them a wave. But I never saw her. Oh, apart from a weekend here and now I knew somebody in Westbury that I'd go and see on a weekend. And apart from that I went off the place. And it was all we ate was cold meat, cold lamb. Every meal. But the lady was a very good cook and she'd send out afternoon tea and that was always very nice cake. She really was very nice. And she had a sister that was at Bridport too.

And what were your living conditions here like?

Just ordinary in an ordinary little houses with three our four little boys. Used to squawk in the night now and again. And just ordinary and I'd go to bed quite often. And to vary my diet my parents used to send up a cake - a parcel now and again - with a cake of chocolate in it. Oh yes, he was a hardworking man.

What sort of hours would you have?

I don't think it really mattered. I think we'd start about eight. We didn't run to time. It was a case of have breakfast and out into the farm. And you'd work

pretty late. You'd be inside for tea and then I'd go to bed. They were young but the majority of people were young.

So you didn't have much social contact?

I didn't have much social contact, nothing in common with them, apart from the fact I knew her. I knew her but she was hardworking the same as her husband, looking after the little boys and feeding her husband. But they didn't go off the place much. I think he might have been a sick man and they had to have somebody to do all this work. I think I probably went harrowing and he went ploughing or something. But you'd get in a big paddock and there you'd have to stay and harrow all day. I suppose we went in for lunch, I don't know, or I might have had sandwiches out in the place.

So why was using a one horse harder than using the three horse team or a four-horse. team?

Because four will go all together, walk all together, but when you get to one, they just walk along and then you'd try to turn a corner and they're inclined to step over the chain of the harrows. That's a bit of a mess. But I got used to it. I ruined my feet I'm sure then.

What do you mean?

Oh, my feet are sore, and one foot goes one way. Oh, not really, I always say it ruined my feet, that's all.

So you did a lot of working behind?

Oh yes, I walked acres and acres of it. Six weeks and then they said, the Land Army said, Miss Hodgeson said, "Do you think another Land girl or if they want one would you send one there?" I said, "Oh no, I don't think so". He was very, very hard.

In what way do you think he was hard? He expected…?

He expected all the time, really had to work hard. Didn't like the idea of you having a day off. There was Easter or something and he wanted me to work all the time and have any extra time off that I was due for at the end of it because he wanted to get the work done.

So the work was probably the hardest work that you'd had up to that stage?

Up till then, yes, it wasn't so hard, Sue, it was continuous. Very, very continuous, no variation. Especially after I'd just come from Cressy. No variation. I was probably told that it would be harrowing, horse work. We didn't pick the jobs; it was a case of we went where we were told. And they from

Cressy at that stage were selecting girls that they thought would be all right for it, that mine wouldn't be too far away that I would be, of course, living in with the family and I'd be doing a bit of harrowing or horse work. Well, I must have had a bit of experience with that at Cressy before I would have been sent out to do horse work.

Do you know if at the end of your time there if another Land girl was sent on?

No, I don't think so. They probably didn't want one. It was only a small property.

And would he be doing other jobs during the day?

He did other jobs but I think he might have been sick. And he couldn't have done much because I think, oh yes, he'd be working mending a fence or something.

And did you know any other land girls in the area around?

No, I never saw anybody, except my friends in Westbury, right in Westbury. And I had to get there. I had no transport there at all, and my family sent me up a bike which I had to learn to ride and I'd ride down the road half way and then I'd get off and have a little walk and then I would get on it and I gradually learnt how

to ride the bike. Not down the present road, the road was in a different area.

And what was the pay like at this stage, was it better than what you were getting?

Seven and sixpence.

Still?

We never got much in any case, whereever we went. Heaven knows what we got at Sassafras. Wasn't very much more I don't think.

Well, after you left Westbury, what happened?

I went back to Cressy for a little while because they didn't have anywhere much to send me. My father being a doctor, he was particular that I wouldn't be doing hard work. Not that it really mattered. I went back to Cressy and there I used to relieve them in the housework occasionally. I'd be in charge of supervising the cooking, you know, or we'd have to get up early and the one in the kitchen used to have the breakfast. They'd have to lay the table and all that and then they'd have the dinner. I don't know what you did in between times. And then you'd have it at night. You'd have a day in the house a week, I think. And I went back there and supervised that so that the cottage mother, who ever it was, perhaps would have a weekend

off and I'd do a bit of the housework. I don't think we'd be left on a weekend. But perhaps if she wanted a night away then I'd do that. And I'd spend quite a bit of time in the house. And then, you see, off we went to Gunns Plains.

Just going back to that point you were saying about your father not wanting you to do hard work. Why was that?

Just because he was a doctor, I think, didn't like the idea of me doing say tractor work or something. I don't know what it was. I don't think it was anything very much.

Was he more concerned about heavy lifting?

Lifting and all that kind of thing. It wasn't the right thing for a girl. But they didn't say much; they just let me go to the Land Army.

Do you think, I mean, Miss Hodgeson would have know that? Would that have influenced where you were sent?

Yes, yes, I think so. I think so. But there again, Miss Hodgeson and Mrs Thomas and all of them they had to know the farm before you sent you on it. And you occasionally got, say, people like Westbury where probably they didn't know it was going to happen,

seeing as Miss Hodgeson said to me what did I think about sending another girl there. They'd just write in and say they'd want a girl. Anyway, we went to Gunns Plains and I really didn't know where I was going there. And it was up by Ulverstone, and be out of Ulverstone and it was up in the hills. We went right down into, I wondered what. I went by train and I was met and taken then by bus and these were English people. They were very nice. And up all over the hills and eventually we went right down the bottom like a lake. And I lived with the wife who was a Land girl; she'd been an English Land girl. And they'd brought out their old nanny, she was awfully nice and they had three children. I think two might have been there, I think one might have been at boarding school. And we just did the farming together and that was very nice.

Who's we?

Mrs Cannon and I, and Nanny did a bit now and again. Oh, she didn't do much, did a bit of sheep work. And we milked 60 cows - I think we might have had another boy on the place - but we milked 60 cows by hand. And we had, oh you know, calves to feed and we'd go out in a horse and cart feeding. I must have been there in the winter. Feeding hay and that kind of thing. And then we'd have sheep; she had a lot of sheep. And we'd go out and even the last feed, oh, we'd have to walk around the hills with a lamp and the last look around was about eleven o'clock before we went to bed. We'd

have to sit up so we could see everything was all right.

Was this with the lambing?

And then we'd get up and we'd have to go around before breakfast to see everything was all right. We'd spend the majority of the day feeding out and looking after the lambs. And in the winter, you know, we didn't have much milking. And then we'd have pet lambs we had to feed. And by the time you went to bed you were just about dreaming lambs.

Where was Mr Cannon?

Mr Cannon was in the Air Force, a very handsome man. And he was away but he'd come back, he'd come back for a night or a weekend. He didn't come and stay very long. He loved the ladies, I believe, but you mustn't put that in. That he was very nice and he was always very helpful with us. I've been back since then, just into the area and I've seen where it was. And I have met since I've been up here different ones. "Oh yes, but you were the Cannon's land girl during the war, weren't you?" And they were people who came from Gunns Plains who remembered me.

How did Mrs Cannon get on with the farming? Had she been quite experienced on the land?

Yes, she was quite experienced. She knew a bit more than probably he knew. But it was very easy going farming. Just sheep and a few cows, or all the cows. But see, you take me back a few years, don't you?

So you lived in?

I lived in there. And you know it was good farming. Oh yes, and while I was there they had a wireless program in Hobart of the Land Army and on a Saturday morning this program would come on and it didn't, I had to crane my head right into the wireless, these funny old wirelesses, to hear the Land Army news. Because it wasn't very clear up under the hill there. But I'd always hear them and they'd say cheerio Patkins or cheerio this one or that. And it was only just little bits of news. But they'd send out to the Land girls.

And by this stage were you still getting the same pay, seven and six?

I think we must have been Sue, I can't remember us getting any more. Seven and six and keep. I don't know what we did when we were at home, whether we got seven and six. I don't suppose we got paid any more or they'd just keep us. But going right back to the beginning whether we were seven and six a day when we had casual work I don't know.

And so how did it feel at that time working for a woman employer?

It was very nice we worked very well together. It was very nice and she just took me in as one of the family, being a bit younger, I don't know how old she was.

What were the hours like? Were they as long?

Oh, you just, oh no, you just fell in with the family. You'd get up for breakfast. I suppose, no, we wouldn't get up for breakfast, we'd get up and go and do the dairying and you'd have breakfast at about nine. But I think that you had a drink of something before we went out. I remember some kind of drink we had but it was made of milk. It wasn't Activite it was something else. And they'd make this must have had nourishment in it and probably a bun or something with it and you'd go out and you'd come in and have breakfast late like they do on the farms. Then we'd go hand feeding.

And who would be doing all the cooking?

Probably the old nurse and the mother. See, she wouldn't go and do the feeding, the feeding of the lamb the feeding of the stock. I think they must have had somebody else as well as me. I wouldn't have been left the responsibility in that place of going out and getting the truck ready. The boys, the children went to school - I presume it was a local school - and they

probably had another person, a boy there that we'd take the cart out and feed out. Because I remember Mr Cannon being there and he and I'd feed out. But I don't think she did and she was probably around the house. In fact, I think they might have even had the post office. It was a tiny little area. And they'd feed, we'd have good meals. And what we did at night I don't know. We'd probably go to bed terribly early I suppose.

Did you have sort of any social contact outside the farm?

No, there was one or two of the farmers; they lived pretty close to the road. One or two of the farmers now and again or the wives, I don't know whether the men were there, would invite me along to Sunday's lunch, but I really didn't have much. I suppose they were acquaintances …

[Break in tape]

The woman who was employing you at this place was English, how long had she been living in Australia for?

I really don't know, I think quite a while.

So she was quite adapted and familiar with the Australian climate?

She seemed to be quite happy and you see the Land Army were very happy that I was going to a woman employer. And I think after the war they might have gone back to England. I haven't traced the children, occasionally I hear, oh Cannon, John Cannon. But I've never traced any of them back. Certainly not at Gunns plains.

I was just wondering if any of her farming methods were a bit different to what you'd been used to?

I don't know, Sue, I don't know. I think it wasn't very technical. It was just sheep and cows. I don't know how far it went back. In those days you didn't really seem to worry.

How long do you think you were there for?

Six weeks. And I did go home to Hobart a couple of times in that time for a weekend. And I did go into Ulverstone occasionally on a bus in the morning and come back at night. I did know somebody or an acquaintance there, it might have even been the bush nurse, that would have me in for a day now and again. I see that you're supposed to have so many hours off, I don't know whether it was a week or a month or something, you'd have certain days off, right off. Then I'd go in and Mrs Cannon was very, very good. She knew what she'd undertaken with a girl.

What do you mean?

That you'd have to have some time off. Or if anybody rang up or, well, as I say I went to lunch or something with somebody on a Sunday once. And they were all very happy. But the girl wouldn't just be the slave, like Westbury. Oh, I mustn't do that.

So how was it different at Westbury? You felt that you might have been treated as a bit of a slave there?

Yes, I think so, and I think the Land Army realised it with all this harrowing going on and no variation with a girl that had just come out of Cressy.

So when you left Gunns Plains, where did you go then?

We went to Sassafras. Oh yes, I came up on the north west coast here I think with the thought in mind that eventually I would go in the Sassafras hostel, I wouldn't be alone. Sassafras hostel in the first batch and they were trying to put the Sassafras hostel business together then, about that time. And Mrs Thomas was a lot to do with the Sassafras hostel - and she'll tell you all about - they had a meeting of farmers there and different ones offered to take different girls.

So can you tell me about first arriving at Sassafras?

We all arrived in the train to Latrobe, the stations not at Latrobe, and we were met by the farmers and we were gradually taken to this funny little hostel. Where it was like Cressy, but very primitive. We were taken in and there was a cottage mother there waiting for us. And I always remember, the sink was wooden, great big wooden sink where we used to have to wash up. We'd put a basin in it. I don't know, it wasn't really made for say a hostel like Cressy was; it was just a farmer's cottage I would imagine. We have to be careful, see what we say in front of Mrs Thomas but I presume she'll feel the same. Especially bringing it up to the modern age now. It was just merely a cottage and that's all. And we put in our own little vegetable garden. Oh, and we did have bikes there. Quite a few bikes and ponies. We'd go out on occasions at sassafras and we'd go to Sorell for a day and we'd all ride ponies that they'd lent us round the farm or we'd take bikes. And they'd entertain us a bit more and also we had the locals that used to come around. But we changed cottage mothers several times there, the girls, sometimes they'd stay and sometimes they wouldn't stay with us. Sometimes we were even left by ourselves. But we were happy bunch there. I think they were particular as to who they put with us but they were a good bunch.

How many girls do you think there would have been there?

There would only have been about six, six or eight.

That's not many.

Three or four in a bedroom. And we worked to get, we must have put on the local hall and we worked to get bits and pieces to make it more comfortable. We bought a pink carpet and I've still got a vase that we got from the pottery place in Launceston. I don't suppose we had to buy it, I don't remember. And we had, I think we had to provide our own bedding there. And I remember having to have my own bedspread. We bought our own bedding. The beds must have been provided, I suppose. And I think that is where we got the new uniform. Or we got something in the uniform line.

Do you remember having amenities sent to you?

Smokes. You had to put an order in for so many smokes and you'd be sent up smokes. I don't know whether we had chocolate, I don't know.

Did you start smoking in the Land Army?

Yes, I smoked a bit in the Land Army and the rest of my ration, oh it must have been rationed, because I sent it down to my sister who smokes and who still does

smoke. But, of course, I had a bit of a puff here and there just to get the ration. They'd only sent it to anybody that, you know, smoked. I'd get the ration and I'd send it down to Betty. Oh no, we'd go out at night with the boys, and one of the boys lived next door to Marjorie as a matter of fact. And he'd come along in his little car and we'd go to the local dances. We'd ride bikes into Latrobe. I don't know whether you go up the main highway or if they take you round a different way on the bus. If you go up from Latrobe to Sassafras, it's up and down and up and down hills. But we road these bikes and we'd go in on a Saturday afternoon to Latrobe and I think we might have had our meals at the local pub. And then we'd go to the pictures and we'd think nothing of riding the bikes, which you had to walk quite a bit of the distance back to the hostel after the pictures. See, nobody minded. It seems all very funny now to have ridden bikes back along the highway at night, but you'd be in a bunch. I got very friendly with, at one stage, the cottage mother. She was probably a bit older than me, and she wasn't liked with the girls and she'd have a horse, I suppose I road the bike, and we'd bring the horse into Latrobe and she and I would stay over the weekend at the hotel. And we'd go out and just go for a picnic or somewhere else by ourselves. And the girls would be left. But they were a trustworthy lot.

Why wasn't she particularly liked by the other girls?

They didn't like her. She didn't get on and she mixed with the males, and they didn't like her. If we knew what these days, Sue, the things of getting around with males we wouldn't have ever done. You know, the males were very good and very decent chaps with us.

Were there ever any incidences where there were problems with the males?

I think there may have been, I don't know, in different areas, but certainly not in Sassafras. We say to this day, oh, if only we'd known what happens these days, sex and all the rest of it. Well, we didn't. We were all very innocent girls.

You would never discuss sex amongst each other?

No, no way, not like the young ones now. No way, we were just happy go lucky and the males were a good crowd. They didn't encourage it. Really makes you look back. Times have changed.

So you would have quite a bit to do with the local community then?

Yes, they were, it was a very churchy kind. We didn't really mix terribly much with the locals. Only the farmers, you know, had you into a meal or something. We usually took our lunch with us but after a while we

found that some of the farmers were having the girls into their houses. I didn't go very often into the Rockcliff's house, although they were very, very good to me, in fact Clarice is about even now. I go out there even now.

How do you think the local community felt about the Land girls, in particular the wives of the farmers?

I think in Sassafras they were willing to accept us. And where I was with the Wilf Rockcliff's he was, shouldn't say so, one of the laziest farmers and he didn't ever give me terribly much to do. You'd finish in the afternoons sometimes and he'd say, "Oh, there's nothing else for you to do, you might as well go home", or something, and off I'd toddle or they'd bring me in here. And like Mrs Thomas will say, "Oh, Pat is one of my first Land girls." And Clarice Rockcliff will say when we go out, "I'll mix up with her in Devonport", and she'll say, "Oh, and do you know Pat was our Land girl?" I think she likes that. And I'd go out with her. But I always thought that she was probably my age. They had about four kids, four boys, and I always thought up till the last two or three months I always thought she was about probably my own age. They were having the children while I was kind of there. But she's in her early 70s.

Would most of the girls just work for the one farmer or would you rotate to different farms?

They worked for the one farmer, although now and again if they wanted something more to do or somebody was going away they'd push you on to somebody else's farm. I did a lot of horse work at Sassafras, as a matter of fact, but I, of course, did it with all four horses. It wasn't only harrowing. And then when we first started that, they started harvesting peas. And that would be pretty continuous and they'd get a second person, but, of course, the equipment these days has changed a terrible lot there. We'd have to load trucks and they'd get up on top of the truck and, you know, you'd scoop the peas here and there and off they'd go. And this they didn't ask you to do, some girls were asked to do it early in the morning, five o'clock, but you were never asked to do it all night. And they also had - what do you call it? I'm not quite sure - stuff they made string out of.

Flax?

Flax, that's it, flax and we'd grow a lot of flax in those days and that had to be all done. We did a lot of harvesting. We did general. I don't think there were many people of dairies around Sassafras. But you see Jerry Chambers, for instance it was, she did a lot of tractor work and that I think had knocked her insides around a bit and they were careful when they

did give you tractor work that you didn't do it terribly continuous. Because, Sue, you know they were, the majority of these people especially Sassafras were concerned about how your insides were going to stand up to it with the girl labour. But different ones will say now that if we hadn't been in the Land Army we would have been all right to have a child or done something, you know how they go. But, oh no, I really enjoyed Sassafras, and we did get home quite often or Mum would come up with the Red Cross and I'd go off. She'd be going back to Hobart and we'd say to Wilf Rockcliff, he'd say, "Do you want to go back for a few days?" And I'd have more days off than anybody, I'm quite sure. And I'd be trotting off to Hobart. And unfortunately I did break my collarbone up at Sassafras and that was when I was going with another, I think it must have been Jerry, we were on our bikes. We were going to stay with Mrs Thomas, I'd go to stay with her. And Mrs Thomas as you'll see today isn't in the same house as she was in when we were in the Land Army, she's got a cottage on the coast. And I was going there but unfortunately I broke my collar bone before I got there and she was, I think she was a nurse, and she was very good and I was shipped off to Hobart from there.

Did you break your collarbone coming off the bike?

I came off the bike. Skidded in the gravel or something. And she took me in. She was very, very good.

So what did you think was the most difficult job you were doing whilst at Sassafras?

Oh, I don't think much of it in those days probably the horse work. Because I really didn't do as much of the different kinds. You see, I'd harrowed at Westbury. Oh no, it wasn't very hard really, Sue. We really enjoyed it and the worst part was the thistles. Nothing else except hoe thistles. When we first started there we all went hoeing thistles. They didn't know what to expect that we would be able to do. It was mostly farming, just general.

Sorry, this is just when you first arrived and they just sent you out hoeing thistles?

Yes, just hoeing thistles.

And how long was that for?

First six weeks, I think it was. They didn't know, they didn't know what to expect of us. So we hoed thistles madly. Mrs Thomas will say to me, "Do you remember when you hoed thistles?"

And how long did you think you were at Sassafras for?

Oh, a couple of years, two or three years.

And would the group change, the group of Land girls, or quite a few of you stayed there the whole time?

Oh no, yes we stayed there the whole time, don't change. Somebody would go back, I don't know what for, and we perhaps would get somebody, or somebody would even come up and stay.

Would you sometimes get people coming just for a short period and going off?

No, we were a happy bunch and lived together. Occasionally you'd have a fight, of course.

Can you ever remember any incidences?

No, I don't.

Or more humorous incidences?

All I remember is all getting in the same bath, all together, about three or four at a time. Somebody would jump out and somebody would jump in. We didn't care a hang.

Why was that? Was the hot water limited?

Water was limited; we didn't have much water at one stage, not much water about. It was only a case of tanks. I do remember having one funny old girl as the housekeeper, Mrs Hill. I don't know if she's still alive or not. And we'd have one of these parties. We often had parties, we had a dining room and a sitting room, and, of course, it would be only the locals and she was a bit of a wag. But a very good cook to a certain extent and a very good cook when we were having a party, you know, she'd really go to town. And a big joke of hers was to make sandwiches and you'd start to eat the sandwiches and you'd find the thing was made of paper. And she'd love that, of course, everybody always loved her. But she didn't go away very much. See Carol, she used to go with us because she would join in the fun, she wasn't very old. But I think she had back trouble or something was wrong with her and she never went out farming. So they put her in as a housekeeper. Same as Betty Buchanan who died. She was a housekeeper, she didn't go farming.

And was she about your age or was she a bit older?

Oh yes, a bit older, I suppose. She and Mavis Lathy that used to come up and stay. The same people that went to Cressy. They'd do a bit of housework there, cooking, look after the girls.

And would you ever have to take turns to do housework at Sassafras?

No, we wouldn't do housework there. We'd have to look after our own rooms. We did all the washing; we did all our own washing. And, of course, you'd help I think with the kitchen. You were rostered to help wash up and do all the bits and we also tried to start a vegetable garden. But unfortunately that house is not there, that's all gone. And it's only a little way away from where Marjorie lives. Marjorie lives right at the back of beyond, our Marjorie.

So when you left Sassafras, where did you go then?

We went back to Hobart. We decided that we wanted to go back to Hobart, that if we didn't start to think about going to city life we'd never settle down again. And two or three said, "Well, we want to go home because of that but we'll have to be employed in Hobart."

So you actually did discuss this together?

Oh yes, we kept saying, we used to keep saying, if we're not careful we'll all break our backs, or do this or do that and it's time we started to think more on a lines of going back to civilian life or we'll never settle back into the city.

Had most of you come from the city then?

Yes, quite a few of us from Hobart, I think we might have all come from, I don't know whether we all came from Hobart, and so we applied to be sent back to Hobart. And with that I think Jerry might have been staying on, she might have been marrying a farmer. And there were a couple of girls in Latrobe and I think they came from up in Scottsdale area, they decided they would stay up. So they decided to close the hostel, they closed the hostel. And we were shoved back to Hobart and everybody went his or her way. And then we went back to this agricultural place. I think one or two might have already gone and we were sent back to the agricultural place where we stayed. It wasn't long after that the war ended.

What were you doing at the agricultural place?

It was the fowl business that we were doing in the first place.

What did the work involve there?

We didn't do so much the fowl place. A day here and there we'd go in the fowl place. But it was mostly the horticultural place joined to it. Betty Campbell was talking to you. And there we were doing mostly pricking out different plants into boxes, and we'd be

there the whole week and you'd take it in turns that you had to go out and do the watering in glasshouses. We were doing a lot of scientific work, or they were, the agricultural people, and you had to keep a check on it. Tomatoes, they were working on tomatoes, and we'd take home all kinds of different tomatoes. And you'd have a weekend on and you'd have to go out and water, you'd go out and just water the plants, probably only be a morning's work. But this happened now and again.

Now, were you living at home at this stage?

Yes, I went back to home and it wasn't easy to go back to home after I'd been away for so long trying to settle down with my sisters in the Red Cross and them living their own social life. Although my elder sister, she and I get on even very now because she and I do the same kind of set up and her friends are my friends if I go to Hobart from here.

So what particular problems did you have?

Oh, my sister and my mother were social gadabouts and that's that. My father wasn't. We were more like our father.

So where would the problem be, in trying to fit in with this again?

Fit in with it, yes, fit in with it. They'd entertain and I didn't, I don't know, we just didn't seem to click. But nobody took any notice of it in those days. I feel more of it, you know, it's past me.

So going back home were you still mixing with them socially or would you just go out and do your work?

Oh yes, oh yes, no, I'd go my way and they'd go theirs to Red Cross and Mum would go away with the Red Cross still and I'd be plodding around the Land Army in my dirty old clothes and all, but I didn't care. And I seem to have gone my own way always.

And can you remember if your pay had improved?

Yes, I think we must have got a bit more, but not much so. And I think we got the uniform when we were at Sassafras, it all arrived and we all went out in these, well, although I've got photos of me in Hobart. I might have got the uniform at Hobart, I'm not quite sure.

And can you remember how you felt when you first got the full dress uniform?

Oh yes, and our skirts, we thought that was all right. And especially it was such a come up, a lift, when you think of us in jodhpurs and shirts and these straw

hats. We didn't have well, they couldn't have all had green hats. And we went in our straw hats to church. We had to go to church at Sassafras because they were strong Methodists.

Who were strong Methodists?

The area, the area still is. And you see Marjorie she doesn't mix much with the area. She doesn't go into all these people's houses like I do. She has mostly her friends from say roundabouts. See she's coming into Ulverstone to meet up with a bunch of friends.

So what would you wear to church?

Jodhpurs and shirts and harvesting hats. Harvesting hats were straw. They just took it, they were quite happy. I think we might have worn green gloves somewhere, I'm not quite sure. Or brown gloves.

So when you finally went back to Hobart for those last few months, what sort of reactions would you have from people about your Land Army work? Would you get comments?

No, we were all right. Just in the Land Army.

Did you know any Service women at that stage?

Oh yes, I knew some different ones. We were all in uniform.

> And what were their attitudes towards the Land Army?

They didn't take any notice, the Land Army's just there, they don't mind, same as anybody else.

> Did you ever discuss the differences between the Land Army conditions and the Services?

No, we were pretty ignorant in those days, we didn't worry about it. But we didn't think we were getting a very good deal beside these other Services when we came out. See, we only got our uniforms and I probably had bedding or something. See, Sheila Hodgeman was pretty regimental and I don't know whether it's in one of my books, all we were told was, well, we weren't getting the things that the other Services were getting, but at least we knew that we had done a good job. And that was that. And off you'd go. I do remember we got our uniforms. We got our skirts and pants because we immediately started to have them dyed. I had mine dyed black. We all had them dyed black. And we'd have the clothes. But all we knew was, well, we had done a good job and there we are.

Do you think looking back over the years that your contribution to the war effort has been acknowledged?

Yes, yes, Sue, I think it was. We'd done a good job and there you are. Nothing else. We weren't given any pay or any superannuation or anything else like the others. And we were a bit hurt about it. Because we probably worked as hard as anybody else. Probably harder than my sisters, physically ours would have been.

Can you remember discussing at the time with other land girls about your entitlements?

No, I don't think, we were pretty ignorant in those days and we didn't seem to worry. But we were all in the same boat that we had done a good job.

Do you remember taking part in any Victory Day march or parade?

Yes, we went in a Victory Parade, and I don't know which war it was, the first one that ended. We were out at Newtown and we heard it was on and we all dashed into town and at that stage some were private clothes and some weren't, dashed into town. Everybody was running up and down the streets. But I think we did go back, we must have gone back to work the next day for a

while till they got it sorted out. And then we had to go we had a parade through the streets.

Can you remember where you were taught to march? Did you have much practice?

Yes, oh when we came from - it was either Cressy or Sassafras - we arrived in Hobart one night for some parade and we were all told we had to get up to the Barracks, the Anglesea Barracks where we were taught to march. But, you see, we weren't a body that did march.

Was that just before?

No, it was early in the piece. Early in the piece. Oh, when we first joined and we were in the boiler suits, we did have to march, but I don't think we had any practice for it. We must have had some practice, we must have had some practice, I don't know where that started, but I do remember when we came down from somewhere in a massed think we were taken up one night and shown how to turn a corner and, well, you see they must have got us somewhere for us to, you know, put us into line of how we were going to march. Because, you see, we weren't supposed to march, the Land Army.

And can you tell me about when you used to take part in the agricultural shows?

Oh yes, we'd come down from Sassafras, I suppose we were at Sassafras by the time we got to the agricultural shows and come down. Oh, at first, when we were selling apple juice that was in the very early days and they had this - what do you call it - a stall thing all rigged up. I don't think we marched in the parade then. It wasn't until later when we were at Sassafras or it might have even been at Cressy we came down and I was told to. And we had been, oh we helped at Devonport, didn't we? We helped at Devonport Show. Helped at Latrobe show from Sassafras.

What sort of things would you be doing at the shows?

Helping stewarding with the sheep. Stewarding in the shows. And then you see we went to - I don't know whether we helped in the Hobart show with the stewarding or helping a bit - and then, you see, we were asked to go in the parade in Hobart, and that's where I functioned, I said I wanted the biggest bull. Somebody had given me advice as to have the biggest bull in the show. And poor old Daniel was the biggest bull, so I led the Hobart show for a couple of years with a stick and a rope, your arms terribly tired afterwards. But we were all in it. And then near the end we were in our uniforms and whether we paraded or they had us lined up, I don't know, but you see I've got a line up with me in it.

I was going to ask what did you do, after the end of the war had been declared, how long did you stay on working with the Land Army?

I didn't stay on working with the Land Army very long and I didn't have any training for anything else. And I was in the… I was an untrained kindergarten teacher. And I was working in Hobart at the time of when we got engaged to be married and then we went to King Island where my husband was one of the first soldier settlers to go to King Island area. He hadn't got any training unfortunately either, because he and I are about the same age. And he had been training around the farms, too, and seeing what kind of work he wanted to do. He was interested in pigs and cows and so we had a dairy at King Island. And our first child Michael was born on King Island. Honeymoon baby. We only stayed there for 12 months, 18 months I was there. He was there for not much longer. We decided that we ought to move back to Tasmania. Things weren't too good I don't think on King Island. And he wouldn't take a soldier's settlement house, he'd built his house, the thing was still being built when we left King Island, but our main thing was we had children and we were on King Island we'd be losing them when they were a certain age because they'd have to be boarders, come to either Tasmania or Victoria.

When you first came out of the Land Army, did you have any idea at all what you wanted to do?

No, I realised I had to be something and I was interested in the children. And I did go to a couple of conferences. I did go to Adelaide as a conference. We went as a bunch. And then I went to Canberra, to a conference and on the way back from Canberra, I got married in Melbourne.

> And was it difficult to settle down, you know, after you got out of the Land Army, sort of settling down in Hobart again?

Yes, I find that I didn't. I went around with the girls that I'd gone in the Land Army. I suppose we really got settled down, but I really wasn't very keen on settling down to the social life again. Not that I, I never had done, I'm not socially minded. My father's not socially minded. And Barbara my elder sister, she's not very socially minded. She does more of the same kind of set up that I do up here. She's Red Cross, she's in charge of the Red Cross shop in Hobart and does a bit of this and that. Where Betty is a different type, my younger sister, is a different type all together. She's socially minded she goes out cards and all, but not Barbara, no. And this is how we've always been.

> Well, just looking back over all the different employers you had, who do you think you liked working for most?

I liked working for the Rockcliffs. They were good. The Rockcliffs, and, oh, I don't know, Mrs Cannon was very nice, although it was a long way away. I wasn't used to being right, apart from my school days, I really wasn't used to being away much.

Why did you think that the Rockcliff's were… ?

They were nice and interesting and see we always had the hostel. It was good being in the hostel and this is what Cressy thought. I think they thought that I'd be better in a bunch.

Did you ever feel in any of your placements that you were treated any differently because you were a woman?

I don't think so. I don't think it mattered.

Are there any other things that you feel we haven't covered that you'd like to?

I'll think of them tomorrow probably, Sue. No, that's a general thing, and since you've been up here you've really dived into it and I've really thought back. But I'm very pleased that you have interviewed me and my friends, the six you know.

When you were at the Hobart show in 1941 and you had your stall where you were recruiting girls, would you have many civilians come up and ask you about the Land Army?

Don’t know, wouldn’t know.

Do you remember girls or women coming up and ask you?

I don’t remember what we did. Hang it all, it’s 20 years ago, girl.

I was just wondering in those early days what sort of reception the Land Army got when you were just forming?

I don’t suppose they had much, but they must have had something for how did they get all of us? And see Mrs Thomas I reckon will tell you more about that. Oh by the way, the CWA had a bit to do with it, did you know that?

How were they involved?

I think they backed it. Because I have sometimes been in the CWA, have asked did they start it and they said no, they were behind it. In Tasmania, I don’t know what they did anywhere else. Betty Campbell and I did a lot together. Betty Campbell’s parents were Scotch

and they were a dear little couple. She would make beautiful short bread. Did you go to Betty Campbell's house? Yes, well they're in the original little house. And I used to love to go there. She and I were very good friends. Whereever Campbell went, I went, and you do know my name was Patkins?

And what did Betty do, she stayed on?

She was always at Newtown.

The Department of Agriculture? She stayed on their full time?

She was full time. She didn't go away. Atkins Plains.

Did you have anything to do with the girls in the Hagley flax mill?

What did we do at Hagley? That was when we were at Saint Leonards we went there and we must have done a bit of weeding there or something but it was only just there. We never lived there.

Were you wearing civilian clothes when you went on the trip to Saint Leonards, were you? You seem to be in civilian clothes in this photo.

Yes, wearing civilian clothes, yes, we were. There was Joan Dickenson who had a brown fur coat and she wore

that a lot. I don't know what I wore. We must have had uniforms too. And did anybody around the line show you an armband? And we were this armband quite a bit. Where that came from, heaven knows.

The woman who brought the child with her, where was the child living?

The child lived with us. We had the child in the house. I don't know whether we had a cot or what we had for sleeping accommodation.

And this was at the Sassafras camp?

Yes.

Who would mind the child during the day?

Oh, she was the cook and the maid. And one of them, the farmers was very good, and they'd go off and do the shopping, they'd take them. Or they'd order the things and the things I suppose they were delivered. And somebody would bring the milk home from the farm. Oh, and there was a little shop. The White shop. And Mr and Mrs White only lived, not Mr and Mrs White, the son is still alive. He was a Prisoner of War. And we were very friendly with them at one stage and they only live just round here. Here we are with our washing. See, that was on V-Day. I was in a uniform, but those girls were just in ordinary clothes.