

The Holt – History of the Land Girls

An 18th Century Manor House, previously used during the Second World War by the Government Code and Cypher School based at Bletchley Park (the Codebreakers), and German Prisoners of War.

From 1946 to 1948 The Holt (Moore Place Hotel) was used by the Bedfordshire War Agricultural Committee to house up to 40 land girls on worked on local farms.

The Land Girls played an integral part in agriculture not only during the war but also after. It seemed that they didn't only work hard, but they liked to "party hard" too as the saying goes!

Boyfriends were only allowed inside the hostel for invited parties. Normally they had to wait outside for their girlfriends. A large cedar tree by the drive in front of the house enabled the land girls to take turns to kiss their boyfriends goodnight before the 10pm deadline for being in the hostel. They went, on Thursday evenings and at the weekend, to Bedford for dances. Joan Ison nee Taylor remembered attending a fancy dress dance as "The Ghost of Aspley Guise". Land girls were not officially allowed to give lifts to men in their War Ag trucks, but they got round it by giving their boyfriends headscarves to wear, when being given lifts to a dance, so that they looked like girls in the back of the truck. The Anchor pub, across the square from the hostel in Aspley Guise was very convenient for the land girls. There were also socials and dances in the Parish Hall. Local girls accused the land girls of "stealing" the local boys.

We have been very lucky to find some pictures and names to accompany them of some the Land Girls during their time here at "The Holt". And we were very excited to establish that the fireplace in our lounge area still has the same surround as the one in the picture of the "recreation room".

Playing Table Tennis L-R Doreen Wright, Dot?, Joan Taylor, Dora Davies and Peggy "Titch" Kennedy



Peggy Kennedy



Doreen Farquhar

The Holt Xmas Party – Doreen Farquhar (middle foreground with RAF wings). Molly McCann – 2nd from right, back row, light dress



Recreation Room – L-R Doreen Knight, Doris?, Frances Gutteridge, Peggy "Titch" Kennedy, Mavis Tickle, Joan Mack, Dot?, Joan Taylor



Joann Watson



Dora Davies

Mr & Mrs Page, Wardens, watch as the land girls paint the furniture in the dorm. Rosa McEver (R) usually worked in the kitchen.

