Bexley Remembers 1914-18 2014-18

WOMEN, WAR & WORK

Women workers

The world of work radically changed during the First World War as for the first time it saw thousands of women enter into jobs that were normally reserved for men.
The "Crayford Agreement" signed by the Employers and the Engineering Union in November 1914 permitted women to work on machines, as long as the machine was serviced by a skilled male mechanic.

Vickers workers, 1914-1918

Vickers, Frasers and other firms in the Bexley district employed women to make munitions and other material for the War. Vickers also employed women from the upper classes such as Lady Emily Hart Dyke of Lullingstone Castle. Lady Limerick of Hall Place served tea to soldiers at London Bridge Station.

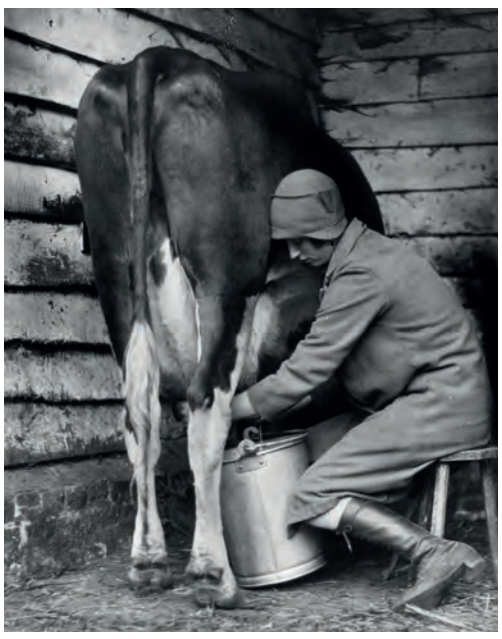
PROUD TO ACT AS TOMMY'S WAITRESS.

Lady Limerick serving tea at London Bridge Station, 1914-1918

Hannah Spash

Hannah Spash was a working class girl from Belvedere. When the war came, she took up munitions work and by the end of 1917 she had worked in three different factories and had rather hair-raising experiences in each. In December 1917 Hannah met the King and Queen who were visiting her work place. Hannah said, "The King asked me whether I liked the dangerous work better than any other." She replied, "Well, I have been blown up three times, your Majesty, so I have got used to it!"

In January 1918, Hannah Spash was awarded the OBE "For courage and high example in continuing her work in a filling factory having been on three separate occasions injured by explosions."



Milking cows at a farm in Sidcup

Women's Land Army

Large areas of land in the Bexley area was still devoted to farming. In March 1917 a national appeal was made for young women to enrol in a new Women's Land Army. After some initial training the 'land girls' worked on farms in the area from June to October each year until 1919.

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