

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANY OF THE STAFF OF DOWLING'S MOTORS IN THIS 1938 PHOTO?

BACK ROW (L TO R) 1. _____, 2. _____, 3. Bill BREMNER, 4. _____, 5. Percy BONE, 6. Albert BONE, 7. _____, 8. _____, 9. Henry BAKER, 10. Reg. WARD.

FRONT ROW (L TO R) 1. _____, 2. _____, 3. May PICKERING, 4. GF Fred DOWLING, 5. Dulcie BREMNER, 6. John DOWLING, 7. _____.

**Connection**

The first six telephones were connected in Swan Hill on October 2 1911.

Those connected and their numbers were:

The National Bank 1,
Edward Trenchard and Co 2,
The Guardian 3,
Frazer and Horn 6,
chemist AA Lord 19
John Gray and Son 20.

Numbers 7 to 18
were connected shortly afterwards

The Guardian April 22 1966.

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A.W.L.A. by GRACE WILLOUGHBY.

Seasonal work usually meant groups of girls and plenty of company but girls sent to a farm were usually on their own – for them there was sometimes the unwanted attention of the farmer or a jealous wife, others were treated as slaves but girls didn't have to stay a phone call or a letter to H.Q. soon righted matters, but most found they were treated like one of the family. Flax – today that is not even grown here so why during the war? – England's supply to make parachute harness and webbings used to come from Germany – enough said. To obtain the linen thread it is harvested into sheaves (like sheaves of hay), were undone and each girl would take a sheaf in her two arms, opening, throwing and spreading the sheaf in one action onto the ground in long rows, row after row across a paddock – it always looked great until the winds came to mess up the rows – then we had to try and straighten the row. Rain and sun rotted the pithy centre of the stalks, thus leaving the linen thread available for further processing after we had picked it all up again from the paddock. One awful afternoon we learnt that stacks of flax at the Mill were on fire so work ceased in the paddock and all hands were kept busy – some to carry vital records out of the mill office and at night others manned the hoses where they crossed the road. It was a devastating experience.

Our spare time gave us a chance to join in local social and church activities. At Mossiface some of us cadged a ride on the little goods train into Bairnsdale and back in the Guard's Van, some had bikes and we got to know the local roads and beauty spots, our boss at Bairnsdale took us all for a picnic across the Gippsland lakes to the 90 Mile beach in a borrowed launch. At Riddell's Creek our Supervisor, an ardent bush walker and naturalist claimed we could walk through the Macedon forest from Riddell to Mt Macedon (about 15 miles) no need of a track – so three of us went with her and arrived home safely at the end of the day – by train. We arranged concerts, learned to play Volley Ball – ideas were endless.

Every state had its Land Girls and though at first we supplied our own work togs, eventually these and Khaki dress uniforms arrived. We were paid £2 a week and our keep, train fares provided, Welfare Personal Number Record books, to now tell me when and where I went. Medical exams, training courses, important to help city girls especially, ours came after about 18 months since we joined. They taught girls how to milk a cow! Daisy was a life size paper mache cow with canvas udder, rubber teats and you poured water into a funnel in her side – ingenious, but I giggled so much, learning something I never wanted to do, we gave up.

By the end of the war the Government had started preparations to grant us recognition as an official 4th Army Service, equal to the other Women's Services – but Peace was declared before this was finalized so all plans were scrapped. However in recent years our War Service has been recognised, we can march on Anzac Day & we were granted the Civilian Service Medal – sadly though the Victorian Government threw out all records of names, service details etc., but after a lot of work, following leads and suggestions the Ex Members Association has found about 1000 names of the 1500 or so who joined the Australian Land Army in Victoria and all these names, photos of available and service details have been lodged in Canberra War Memorial. To cap it all, we were all asked to write of our own Land Army experiences and this record is in local Libraries and the War Memorial under the heading "Down to Earth", compiled by Mary Lowe, Late President Australian Women's Land Army Association.