

## In search of the Women's Land Army around Leek': update Nov 2020

Land Girls (members of the wartime Women's Land Army) and Lumber Jills (working in a sister organisation with the Forestry Commission) helped produce vital food and timber during both World Wars. We're researching connections between former Land Army girls, local farm owners and the community to present these creatively with writing, art, photography and we hope, a '40s Open Day'.

Despite COVID, we are remotely recording the reminiscences of local people with Land Army connections and researching their placements. Always posted miles away (to prevent unsettled girls running home), interestingly many from Leek went to Worcestershire fruit farms. But we're currently short of local contacts whose families employed Land Girls in this area. Can you help?

Eventually we intend to include a range of volunteering, educational and community benefits, such as public open days, research techniques, writing for exhibitions, IT/website/podcast skills, giving talks, leading guided walks, conducting oral history interviews and working with local schools.

Being isolated in a strange place, separated from friends and loved ones, which struck a chord with the Borderland Voices writing group during past months, parallels the situation many Land Girls found themselves in. Just as they were encouraged to write and express their emotions, so our writers have used words to try and make sense of 2020. We're nearly ready to publish an anthology.

By the end of November, an art-pack by our 'artist-in-residence' Becca Baddeley will appear on our website ([www.borderlandvoices.org.uk](http://www.borderlandvoices.org.uk)). It's an invitation to design a recruitment poster for the Women's Land Army, with lots of background resources and some templates if you don't know where to begin. Do send us your artwork or post it in our Facebook group.

When circumstances permit, we'll publish all the research as a booklet, release podcasts and produce an informative and creative exhibition to share around the Moorlands.

We're most grateful to players of the National Lottery and also for some match funding from Councillor Charlotte Atkins (the '*People helping People*' fund) and Leek Arts Forum.



08.11.2020