

Wartime West Sussex 1939 - 1945 WOMEN AT WAR - WAR JOBS

Worthing women turn to war jobs

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Mrs. Reynolds, 90, Lyndhurst-road, Worthing, is an acetylene flame cutter in the works described below. Her husband is in the R.A.F. Her job before this was in a ladies' outfitters in Worthing. "The four months I have been in this job," she says, "have been some of the happiest of my life." You may have heard her voice—she spoke from a Ministry of Information van in Worthing streets recently.

Worthing Women turn to War Jobs

More than 6,000 women are now employed on the Southern Railway helping in the national war effort by doing jobs that have hitherto been done by men, and I have just had an opportunity of seeing some of them at their work, writes a "Worthing Gazette" reporter, at one of the Company's factories.

The visit to these particular works was made at the invitation of the Worthing Information Committee and the Southern Railway in connection with Worthing War Jobs Week.

It must have come as a surprise to many of those who joined the party to learn that already some 250 women and girls from this district are taking the place of men—and, what is more, are enjoying their new jobs.

One of the women told me: "I have now been at these works for some four months. They have been the happiest of my working life."

The two features that impressed visitors most were the marvellously efficient organisation of the works, where everything is done on what is known as the progressive system, and the great variety of the jobs the women themselves are doing there.

Such tasks as sewing machine work on coach upholstery and the white metalling of coach fittings, the painting of woodwork and the driving of motor trucks are what one might expect to see women doing.

WORKING THE STEAM HAMMER.

But others were acting as electric crane drivers, acetylene flame cutters, and operating the massive steam hammer used to convert bars of hot steel into parts of the under carriage of passenger coaches and freight wagons.

It was also interesting to learn the previous occupations of many of these women. One for instance, a Worthing woman, whose husband is now in the R.A.F., and who was manipulating an acetylene flame cutter with remarkable dexterity, had been employed in a ladies' outfitting shop before the War.

Another woman, who was operating the steam hammer, had been a London shop assistant, now evacuated to Worthing.

Another, who was operating the traverser crane in the Pullman shop capable of lifting weights of 20 tons to a height of 50 feet from the ground, is a Lancing woman whose husband is now in the Navy serving on one of the American destroyers.

Yet another team of three, two of whom were formerly working in a newagents and booksellers and a bakers and confectioners shop at



Mrs. Prodger, 18, Thackeray-road, Worthing, has been a factory worker in two wars. She works on white metalling and chipping of coach-bearing brass parts—much the same as she did in the last war. Her husband is in the Army.

Lancing, were engaged in painting the exterior of freight wagons.

These particular works have their own canteen run by a Committee of the workers themselves where anything from 240 to 300 hot meals are served every day at a price which compares most favourably with what they would cost provided at home. The relations between the workers, both men and women and the administrative staff, are of the happiest.

In addition to the Mayor (Councillor Dr. E. G. Annis), the party included the President and Vice-President of Worthing Chamber of Trade (Councillor C. S. Green and Mr. W. F. Blackwell), the President of Worthing Rotary Club (Mr. F. G. Searle), the Secretary of Worthing Information Committee (Mr. H. J. Herink), and his two assistant secretaries (Miss B. Woolgar and Mr. F. H. Mabley), and Mr. E. R. Moreland (the Regional Press Officer from Tunbridge Wells).

They were conducted round the Works by the Works Manager (Mr. O. G. Hackett), Mr. Illston (Assistant Manager), Mr. C. J. C. Latham (London Central Divisional Superintendent), Mr. W. J. Shorter and Mr. A. C. Streetfield (from the Company's Public Relations Department at Waterloo), Mr. W. S. Kersey (Area Representative), and Miss Hawkes (Supervisor of the female staff).