

1940s Weekend in Spalding

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A cheery group of Land Army girls taken at the Bank House Hostel, Gosberton. Several of the girls have four years' service and others could have left several months ago, but so like the life that they are staying on. The duties range from nursery work to tractoring and general farm work. In Gosberton itself the girls are very popular and most of the village functions are attended by them. Any worthy local effort gets their support and only recently we announced that they had raised £50 for the Gosberton Nursing Association.

The cheery Land Army girls based at Bank House Hostel in Gosberton.

It was a time of war and hardships, with shortages and restrictions affecting life for people in South Holland for much of the decade.

But the 1940s was also a time to party for some, and women were finally able to introduce some glamour into their lives.

The fascinating 1940s is the theme of a weekend being staged at Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens in Spalding next Saturday and Sunday, August 17 and 18 (10.30am to 4pm each day).

The 1940s theme will transform the whole site, with vintage [vehicles](#), memorabilia and artillery displays and demonstrations.

Museum and cafe staff will be getting involved too, dressing in clothes of the time.

A singer will be performing songs of the era throughout Saturday.

A new event this year, the 1940s Weekend will form the lead-up to the annual VJ Day Parade on the Sunday, when Spalding Remembrance Association leads the tributes to those who lost their lives in the Second World War in the Peace Garden (2.30pm).

We have delved into our archives from the 1940s to discover what life was really like for local people recovering from long years of war.

As with the picture nationally, there was a desperate shortage of housing, and families were living in what were referred to as “squatters’ huts” on Spalding Grammar School field while new houses were put up as quickly as possible.

These new homes included the Wates type of permanent prefabricated house, 50 of which were built in Daniels Gate, Long Sutton, and a further 50 in Allenby’s Chase Sutton Bridge, in 1946.

In 1947, a prototype of the Airey rural house was put up at Cowbit – at a time when there were no more than half a dozen of them in the whole of England and Wales. Thirty more were planned for Cowbit and there were proposals for 44 at Weston.

In 1946, there were Peace Fairs, Land Army girls were still working locally, and Pearl Taylor, of Holbeach, was the Women’s Land Army county representative in the Victory March in London.

At home, families could buy Utility Furniture, as sold by Longs of Spalding, but food and fuel were in short supply.

There were cartoons poking fun at these post-war shortages in most editions of these newspapers. One, in May of 1947, depicted a couple admiring a field carpeted in crops with the wife saying: “Pity there aren’t any carpets in the shops.”

A propaganda advert in August showed a 1947 housewife’s response to public appeals to restrict consumption of gas and electricity. She told readers: “We housewives can carry on with less electricity and gas. Not so the factories. They come to a standstill when they are short... there are fewer goods in the shops, and houses stop being built.”