

### *My life as a woman in WW1 by Amelia*

My name is Elizabeth, I am 39. I have been married to my husband, Arthur, for 21 years. He's out fighting in France now, at Ypres. We have five children; Henry, he's the youngest, being five, he still makes hilarious comments and keeps us cheerful, and there's Charlotte, she's 9, by far the boss of the family with Arthur away, she almost runs the household! Rose is next, she's 13 and as headstrong as any girl her age, she looks and acts like me when I was younger. My two eldest sons, Jaden (17) and David (19), are also fighting, every day I pray that they return safely. We get along alright, but the help of our neighbours is very important. Clarence and Kim help out when they can, Clarence looks after the kids while Kim and I are at work. She owns three canaries, they sing all day and Henry loves them, they're the reason he doesn't follow me to work in the morning. Clarence has two kids of her own, Florence and Kleo but they are still babies (1+3), she is only 20 but is already a widower. Kim, who isn't married, lives with her brother. Lance – that's his name – is fighting.

I work at the old farm about a mile down the road, Kim and I both work there Monday to Saturday (to work on a Sunday is very bad, it is a great sin!) The farm used to belong to a farmer who kept himself scarce, but when the war started, the council took the farm over and got loads of volunteers from our area to work there. I like working there but it feels weird, there is one man there, our boss, but the rest of us are women. It feels like a whole new world! Women, with a proper job, it's fantastic! The things we do in the land army are enjoyable. I don't love the job; I like it, though I do love the horses! We do ploughing, sheep-shearing, milking, butter-churning, we cut down the trees, we collect eggs, we train and ride horses to ready them for the army and we work the big machinery. The machinery is dangerous part of my job, you could lose a finger or two. Thankfully, I don't do much machine-work as I'm so good with horses, that I'm often put with them. The money is good; we get paid 3 shillings a week, that's loads! Kim uses the wages to pay for the tram, I use my wages to pay for food. To afford the tram, we walk to and from work for one week, then the next week we walk to work but get the tram back. It's hard to balance the washing, sewing and children with my job, but I manage it if I stay up late.

I work a long day; leaving for work at 6:00 and arriving home at 9:00, I am exhausted both physically and mentally. When I get home, the children are always round the table with Clarence, eating their bread and cheese, Rose helping her with her own children. They are given a daily spoonful of cod liver oil by Kim, before getting into the bath, after I've been through. When they have bathed, Henry and Charlotte get into bed, while Rose stays up to help me. Clarence goes next door for the night, but Kim stays to help as well. The three of us have a great chat every night as Rose and I do the washing and Kim mends any broken clothes. If there's any spare time at the end of that, then we sit down and start on a rag-rug each to put over the bare floorboards for a bit of comfort during this dreadful time. At around 10 pm, Kim goes home and Rose goes up to bed. I stay up for another half hour to put out clothes, get out tomorrow's tea and leave a note for the children that says goodbye as I am gone when they get up. That's my daily life, it's tiring, and it has its' ups and downs, but I love it!