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A COUNTRY WAR **REPRINT**

MEMOIRS OF A LAND GIRL

Maud 'Micky' Mitchell

The Women's Land Army played a fundamental role during the Second World War. With so many young men called up for the armed services, there was a severe shortage of labour on farms, and the government called on women to fill this gap. At a time when U-boats were destroying many merchant ships bringing supplies to Britain from America these workers helped keep Britain fed. In theory, new members of the WLA were to be trained in such tasks as milking cows, harvesting, drainage and so on. In reality, such was the demand for food, that what was learned was done on the farm as time went on.

This memoir is the fascinating story of one woman's reminiscences of life in the Women's Land Army from 1943 until the war's end. Barely 17, the author describes the shock of moving from her home in Blackburn, Lancashire, to take up her first farming job deep in rural East Devon, first near Whimple and then Upottery. Adapting quickly to the country way of life, despite the often backbreaking tasks, she describes life on the farm working from daybreak until dusk throughout the seasons. With frankness and humour she relates encounters with British and US Servicemen stationed at airfields nearby, trips into Exeter for Saturday night dances, and romances ended by the tragedy of war.

Supported throughout by her fellow Land Army colleagues, and by the kindness of most of the farming community, the author at last finds true and lasting love.

Maud 'Micky' Mitchell, now Maud Shire, returned to Devon following her marriage in 1946 where she continues to live, not far from the scene of her wartime memoirs in her beloved Otter Valley.



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