

Ann Lancaster – A Ruston Munitionette

In 1916 Ann Lancaster of Newport, Lincoln, joined Ruston to work on the production of military aircraft. *"We were engaged on sewing the fabric covering and fitting it to the airframe. Five of us worked on a machine. The sewing and tacking part were alright, but we were only allowed to work two hours at a time in the doping shop because the fumes were harmful to the lungs. We had to go outside in the fresh air for a twenty minute break – and drink milk or cocoa to neutralise the effect of the fumes. Once a fortnight the doctor would give us an examination check. The fabric was Irish linen, very strong. Our day was 6am to 6pm, with making-up time if late in. There was an hour for lunch, and half an hour for tea. Overtime was worked nearly every night, and on Saturdays and Sundays. I once made £5 in a week. The rate was 11½ d an hour, which we got raised 1s after a wrangle and talk of strike action by the forewoman."*



Photograph showing Ann Lancaster and her fellow Ruston munitionettes pulling a Sopwith Camel along Monks Road, 1918. Ann is on the far left of the picture. Document reference: MISC DON 1642/9/2.