

The thrill of wartime work



During times of crisis, a government may sometimes try to influence people's behaviour so that they will help the country to overcome its difficulties. Publications that aim to influence people in this way are called 'propaganda'. This extract encourages teenage girls and women to become farm workers by joining the Land Army. So many of the men and boys had gone away to fight in World War 2 that there were not enough of them available for this work.

Peggy has parted from her father, who is rejoining his ship, and she is setting off to join the Land Army.

"'Smile when you wave me goodbye' is a mushy song, but there's something in it," Peggy was thinking. "One up to me. I didn't let him down over parting. My eyes are quite dry. I'm glad he said, 'No waving,' for I simply couldn't have kept a stiff upper lip over seeing her sail. Oh, dear little dirty, rolling *Iris!* God keep you safe and take care of you and guide you past mines and submarines and bombers, and bring you and Daddy safe home again."

Not feeling quite so tough, and seeing the railway approach through a mist of which she was duly ashamed, Peggy repaired to the train. Once settled in the corner of a third-class compartment, her own immediate affairs came bubbling up on top of her excited thoughts, and finally drove out the regrets of parting.

How could she feel unhappy? Her head and her heart were full of thoughts that jostled and raced one another, just as her eager pulses were racing with the rush of life, life that was taking hold of her blithe youth, snatching her up out of the quiet waiting time of schooldays, into the stern, real, workaday world, a world at war.

"It's splendid to be born now," Peggy thought. "People have been born and lived and died, and never once had a chance to do things ..."

From *Peggy Speeds the Plough*
Madge S. Smith

1 What is the purpose of propaganda?

1 mark

2 Why would putting propaganda in a story setting help its purpose?

1 mark

3 What slang word does Peggy use that means 'over-sentimental'?

1 mark

4 Peggy keeps a 'stiff upper lip'. What does that mean?

1 mark

5 What is the name of the ship on which Peggy's father goes to sea?

1 mark

6 What is the 'mist' of which Peggy is ashamed?

1 mark

7 'Repair' often means 'to mend'. What does it mean here, in the second paragraph?

1 mark

8 What sort of work would Peggy be doing in the Land Army?

1 mark

9 How do you think a farmer might feel when young women arrived to take the place of his regular farm workmen when they went off to fight in the war? What sort of problems would the farmer and the land girls face?

2 marks

page 21
total out of 10