Cumbria at War
1939 - 1945

A Role Play Exercise in seven chapters, for use in secondary schools

Chapter 3

Working at Home

War Work

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A Cumbria Archive Service learning resource for secondary schools,

created by Guy Woolnough September 2009, modified for web April 2011

Vital War Work?

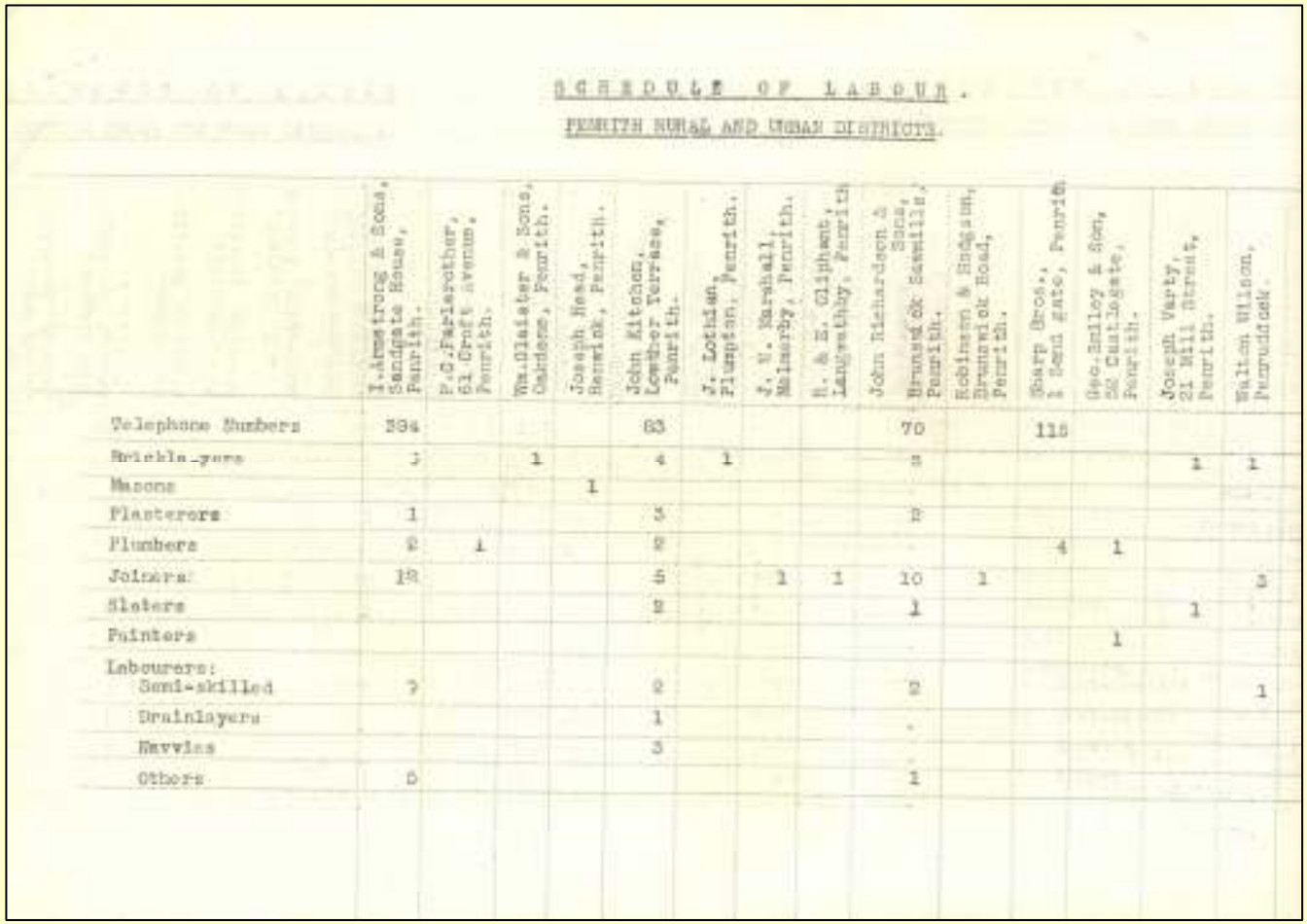
Unemployment did not exist in the war. Everyone was needed, everyone worked long hours and worked hard. For the first time in history, women too were told that they had to work, and they were told where they had to work. This was called “directed labour.”

You can hear, in this sound clip, Kath Salrein explaining what happened when she tried to leave her factory job in order to join the ATS.



Follow link on our website to hear how Kath was not allowed to quit her job

Directed Labour



SCHEDULE OF LABOUR.

PENRITH RURAL AND URBAN DISTRICTS.

	T. Armstrong & Sons, Sandgate House, Penrith.	P.C. Parkerother, 61 Croft avenue, Penrith.	Wm. Gleister & Sons, Caldbeck, Penrith.	Joseph Head, Hemrdale, Penrith.	John Kitchen, Lowther Terrace, Penrith.	J. Lothian, Plumpton, Penrith.	J. W. Marshall, Melmerby, Penrith.	H. & E. Oliphant, Langwathby, Penrith	John Richardson & Sons, Brunswick Sawmills, Penrith.	Robinson & Sedgwick, Brunswick Road, Penrith.	Sharp Bros., & Sand gate, Penrith	Geo. Smiley & Son, 58 Castlegate, Penrith.	Joseph Varty, 21 Mill Street, Penrith.	Walton Wilson, Penruddock.
Telephone Numbers	394				83				70		115			
Bricklayers	3		1		4	1			3				1	1
Masons				1										
Plasterers	1				3				2					
Plumbers	2	1			2						4	1		
Joiners	12				5		1	1	10	1				2
Slaters					2				1				1	
Painters												1		
Labourers: Semi-skilled	7				2				2					1
Drainlayers					1									
Navvies					3									
Others	5								1					

The Government ordered Local Authorities to keep a record of all workers who could be useful. (eg for emergency repairs after air raids.) Here is a document detailing the firms which have men available in Penrith.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. SUDC 1/3/271

(Schedule of Labour, Penrith and District)

WAGES: WAR BONUS

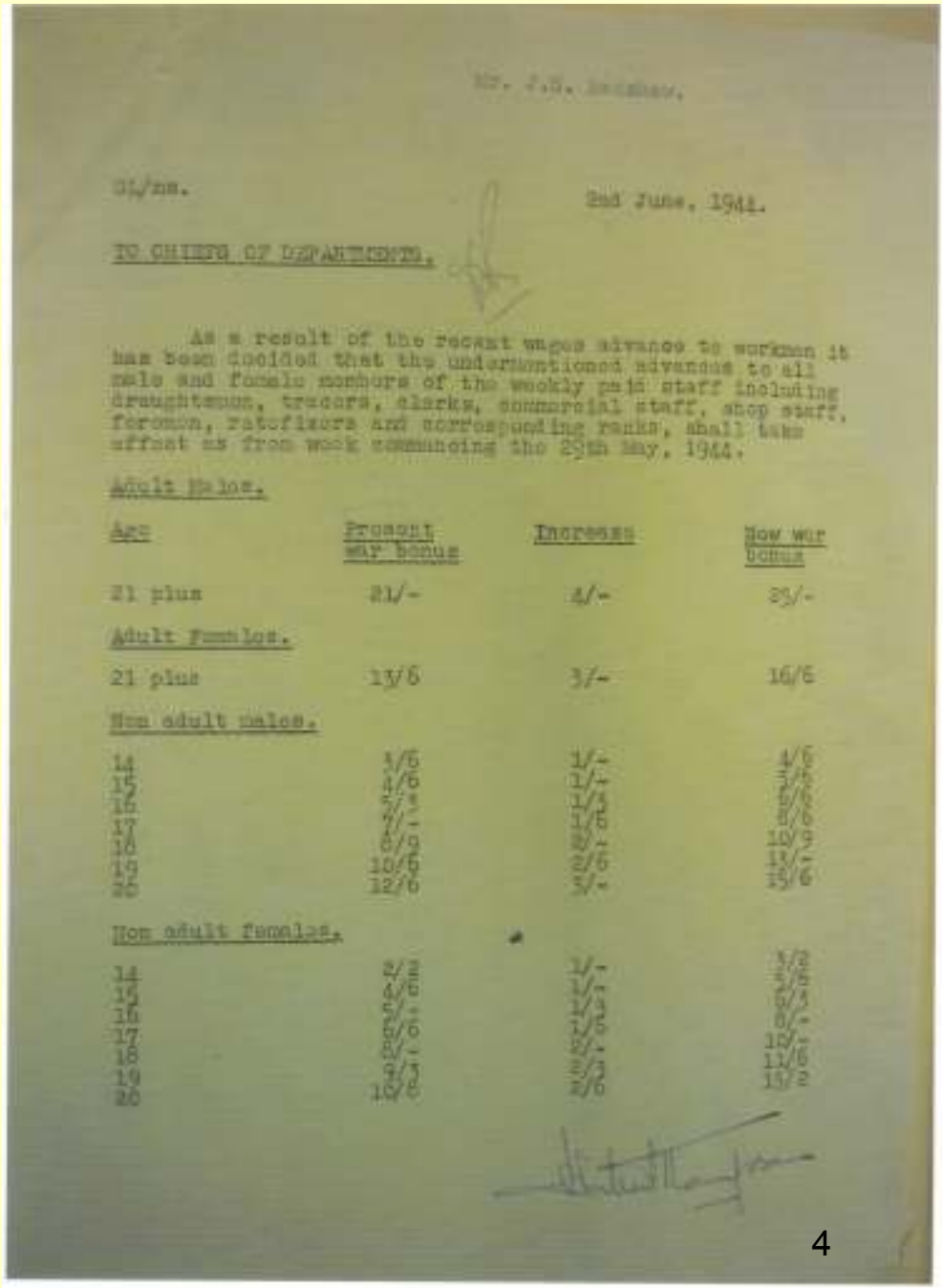
Long hours meant more pay, and the rate of pay went up too.

Office workers were given a weekly war bonus, added on to their pay.

This notice told workers at the Barrow ship yards about an increase in the bonus.

The rates for women and men were different.

25/- means	25 shillings,	which is £1.25
16/6 means	16 shillings and sixpence,	which is 82.5p
1/- means	1 shilling,	which is 5p



Mr. J.S. Lansley.

31/mm. 2nd June, 1944.

TO CHIEFS OF DEPARTMENTS.

As a result of the recent wages advance to workmen it has been decided that the undermentioned advances to all male and female members of the weekly paid staff including draughtsmen, tracers, clerks, commercial staff, shop staff, foremen, ratefixers and corresponding ranks, shall take effect as from week commencing the 29th May, 1944.

Adult Males.

Age	Present war bonus	Increase	New war bonus
21 plus	21/-	4/-	25/-

Adult Females.

21 plus	13/6	3/-	16/6

Non adult males.

14	1/6	1/-	4/6
15	4/6	1/-	5/6
16	5/3	1/3	6/6
17	7/-	1/6	8/6
18	8/9	2/-	10/9
19	10/6	2/6	13/-
20	12/6	3/-	15/6

Non adult females.

14	2/3	1/-	3/3
15	4/6	1/-	5/6
16	5/-	1/3	6/3
17	6/6	1/6	8/-
18	8/-	2/-	10/-
19	9/3	2/3	11/6
20	10/6	2/6	13/2

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Barrow



Many firms moved to Cumbria in the war. This is Edgards, photographed in 1945. This firm made military uniforms, so war was good for business. These people were making leather jackets to be worn by aircrew and tank crew. Edgards had been in London, but they were bombed out, so transferred to Whitehaven.

Whitehaven News, 8th March 1990

The founders of the MARCHON business



Frederick Marzillier and Franz Schon started their chemicals business in 1939 in London, but moved to Whitehaven in 1941, to escape the bombing. Marzillier had been educated in Germany, but came to London in 1934, shortly after the Nazis came to power. Schon was born in Austria, had lived in Czechoslovakia; his family was Jewish, so he came as a refugee to London in 1939. Their business did well. By 1945, they were employing 87 people. As refugees from Nazi Germany, they had good reason to work had to help win the war.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YDB 59/12/1

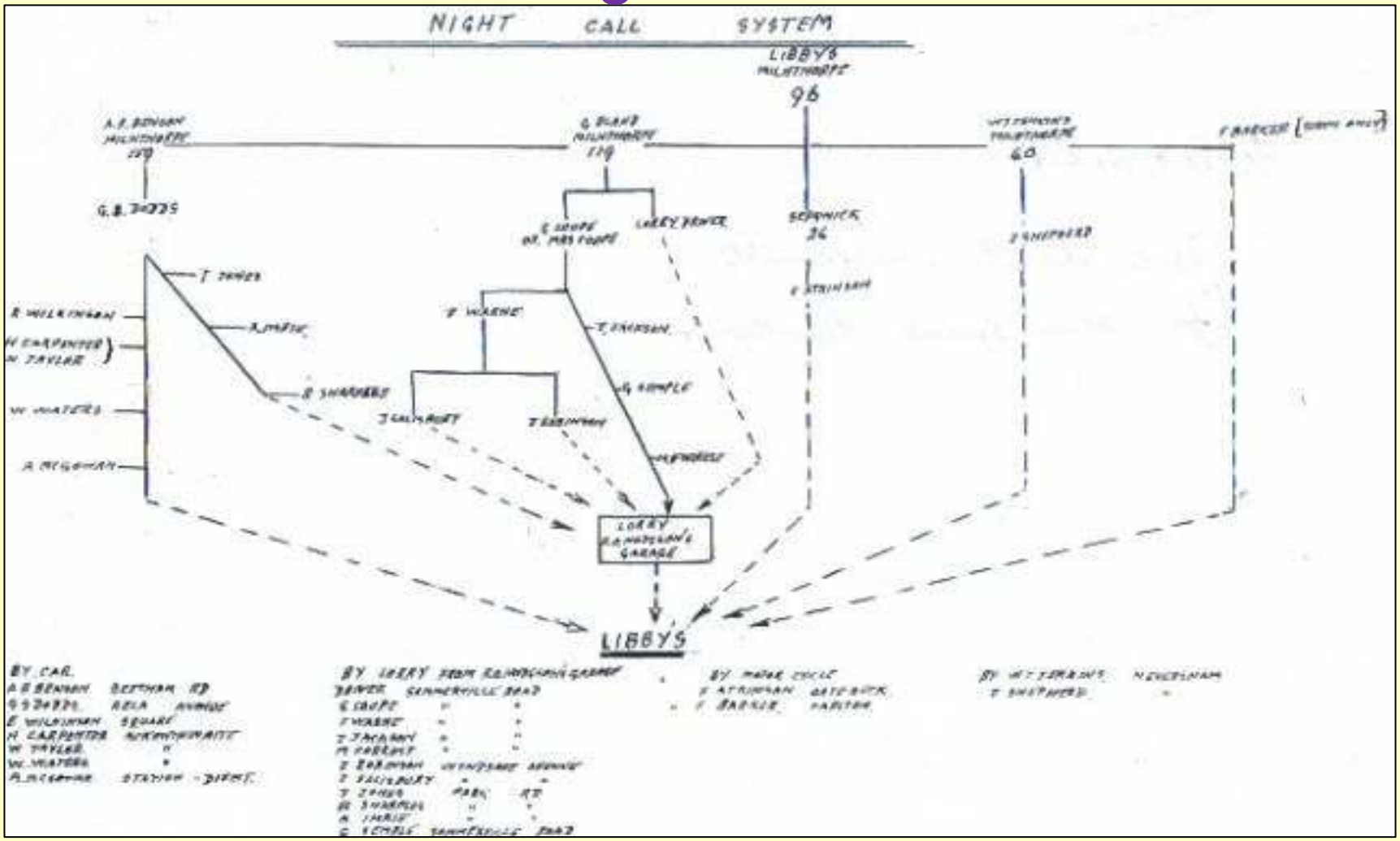
The Workforce at Marchon in the War



These are the people who worked for Marzillier and Schon. You can see they were mostly older men, women and teenagers (who would later on be called up for military service).
Before the war, the west coast of Cumberland had been very depressed. The old industries were in serious decline and unemployment was very high. But after 1939, there was no shortage of work. Many of the people in this photo would have had personal experience and memories of the effects of unemployment. So for them, the war wasn't all bad news.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YDB 59/12/1

Volunteering for extra Work



Many people were willing to come in and help at work in an emergency. This rather complicated diagram shows the system for getting men into Libby's factory at Milnthorpe, in the event of a problem occurring during the night

Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal. WDX 421

Building New Industries



This photo shows one of West Cumberland's derelict iron works. This site was ideal for heavy wartime industry. It was far enough in distance from Germany to be a bit safer from air attack, and many of the raw materials needed could be found locally or brought in by sea. Within a year, this site was transformed.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YBD 68/3/16



The same view, a few months later. Work had started to build a MAGNESITE WORKS. Magnesite was a special metal alloy which was very important for the manufacture of military equipment. The factory needed to be safe from German attack, so this site near Whitehaven was chosen.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YBD 68/3/16



The same view, 18 months after the work started. A new industry, fully operational and helping to win the war.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YBD 68/3/16



18 TON MASSEY DROP STAMP PRESS. 16/01/41

By January 1941, the heavy machinery was in place and production had started.


HONSLOW PRESS, SOUTH EXTRUSION. 08/01/41

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YBD 68/3/16



The new canteen at the Magnesite works. Industry realised that it was very important in wartime to get the best out of the workers, so much more effort than ever before was made to provide good working conditions. Works canteens were very popular with the workers, because rationing meant that it was not always easy to get enough to make good meals at home.

Cumbria Archive Centre and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. YBD 68/3/16

Cumbria at War, 1939-1945

A Role Play Exercise in seven chapters for use in secondary schools.

Chapters:

1. *Introduction: VE Day, Cumbria, May 1945.*
2. *In Uniform: those who served in uniform in Cumbria.*
3. *Working: those who worked in Cumbria to help win the war.*
4. *Home Supplies: how Cumbrians got what they needed in the war.*
5. *Away from Home: evacuees, and Cumbrians serving overseas.*
6. *Missing Home: prisoners of war, Cumbrians and Germans in Cumbria.*
7. *Not Coming Home: remembering those Cumbrians who fell in the war.*