

## LADY BARGEES START WORK ON CANAL FRONT

Women in wartime are certainly going places - this time by canal - taking on the very last job you'd expect to manning the barge. After instruction in working the engine of the power boats - ~~how to start it and keep it in going order~~, the new inland water sailors proceed to such nautical matters as knotting and splicing, and in a short time they're all set for the maiden voyage. Old hands were sceptical at first, thinking the work too heavy for girls who hadn't been born and bred to it.

~~It is a hard job, but the girls are doing it well. They are learning to handle the engine and to work the horses. They are also learning to handle the cargo and to work the locks. They are all doing very well and are much to be commended.~~

They put the girls on power boats because it takes genuine bargee language to get the best out of the horses.

(aft girl walk) On this canal the boats ply between London and the Midlands, a trip which takes <sup>5</sup>~~6~~ days. The power barge tows the other and the complete crew is 3 girls.

5 nights are spent afloat on the voyage each way. The little cabins have been made cleaner and more comfortable than ever before. It's a healthy, care free life, most of it in the country air, and no rush for trains to catch every morning. Each <sup>day</sup>~~morning~~ begins a ~~day~~ of new adventure.

On the 140 miles between London and Birmingham they go through 150 locks. As there are few lock-keepers on canals they have to do the work themselves. It all makes the travelling a bit on the slow side, but for some cargoes speed matters less than cheapness. Life on the canal isn't every girl's ideal war work, but those who've chosen it wouldn't change for anything indoors. It helps to win the war in a thoroughly enjoyable way.