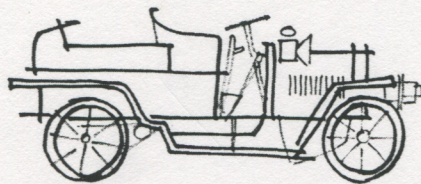
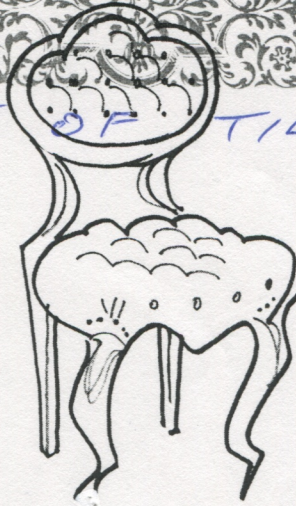


EXTRACTS FROM "THE GOLDEN THREAD"
ON EARLY DAYS OF E. LUCAS & CO P/L



AND WORKING LIFE OF TILLY THOMPSON
MBE



or in the old skating rink at Bendigo where Mr Price opened hampers when he was on the road. Mr Myer arrived like a high wind. He had a habit of scribbling orders on the back of sample tickets and tossing the samples themselves on the floor, leaving behind him a litter of garments and papers.

Many other Lucas customers of the zestful early days were men who, like Mr Myer, were destined to become giants of Australian commerce. They included Mr Francis Foy, Mr W. Manton, Mr Harley George and Mr John Snow, all of Melbourne; Mr George Wright and Mr J. N. Grace of Sydney; Mr Charles Moore and Mr John O'Dea of Adelaide; Mr T. C. Beirne of Brisbane; Mr Harry Boan and Mr T. Ahern of Perth; Mr C. E. Moore of Broken Hill; and Mr James Smith of Wellington, New Zealand. The first cheque for an order worth more than one thousand pounds was paid by Mark Foy's Ltd, Sydney. The sum was £1,196/8/6 and the date September 5, 1908.

Among the most colorful personalities on the Lucas customer list was Miss M. L. Clennell, buyer for Tyler's drapery in Bridge Street, Ballarat, a woman of boundless enthusiasms and terrifying energy. She had formed a firm friendship with Mrs. Lucas at the time when the 'Busy Bee' was making up Tyler's materials, and Mr Price realised that this female dynamo was just the asset he needed in the merchandising side of a business growing too big for one person to handle. *IN THE EARLY 1900'S.*

Mr Price's three sisters had left the firm when they married, and Mrs Lucas herself, approaching 60 years of age, preferred to hand over the administrative reins increasingly as she saw how

capably her son held them. When the firm moved to Armstrong Street, Mr Price was faced with a problem in executive staffing. He sought a young lieutenant, particularly to promote the firm's expanding sales. He appointed 'Tilly' Clennell.

She joined Lucas in 1905, and became Australia's first woman commercial traveller. When she later married, the name of Mrs W. D. Thompson became a byword among buyers throughout the Commonwealth. One businessman said of her: 'She was the only traveller I can remember who could handle nine different buyers at once and keep them all happy'. *ADD.

Mrs Thompson's arrival was in a sense a crucial event in the history of E. Lucas and Co. The factory had grown beyond recognition, yet in one vitally important aspect it was no different from the 'Busy Bee'. It was still an organisation of individuals. One Lucas employee who recently completed 50 years' service, summed up its unique character in these words: 'If you're to be happy at work, you must think that whatever you're doing you are important. With Lucas, all of us could think we were important in the place'.

If Mr Price, forced to delegate authority outside the family, had chosen an executive with a different sense of values, the Golden Thread of personal responsibility which Eleanor Lucas had first spun might, somewhere along the line, have frayed and snapped.

But Mrs Thompson was a fiery individualist. She saw everyone else as individuals, whether opposed or in alliance. Impatient and impetuous, she brooked no obstacles. It was said of her:

* ADD AFTER "ALL HAPPY" -

AT THIS STAGE IN 1905 LUCAS & CO HAD A WORK FORCE OF 55 GIRL MACHINISTS. TILLY CLENNELL THEN 34 YEARS OLD (OR YOUNGER) BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN IN BALLARAT TO OBTAIN A DRIVERS LICENCE AND BELIEVED TO BE AUSTRALIA'S FIRST COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER, PROMOTING SALES TO DRAPERS THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA - TRAVELLING BY A MOTOR CAR SIMILAR TO AN EARLY MODEL "HUMBERETTE" - ILLUSTRATED

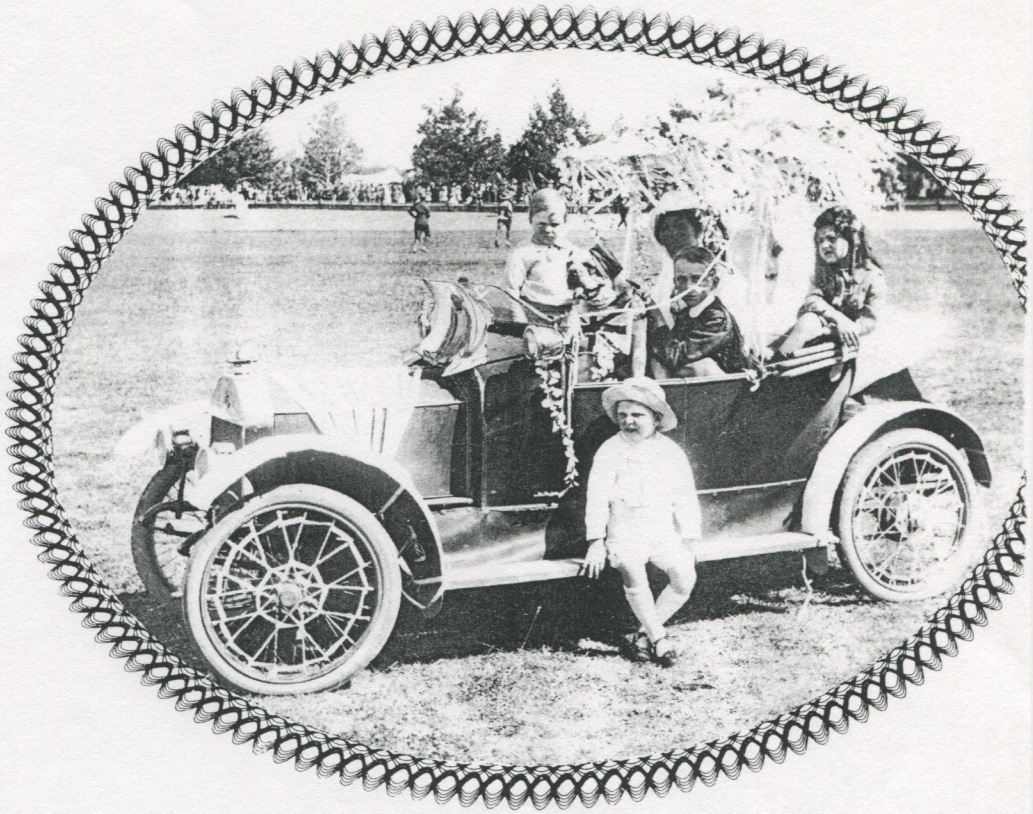
Now
Back
above

START

QUOTE

ELEANOR

BETTER (STILL)



The first travelling sales lady, Mrs Thompson, and friends

'When she came into the factory, you didn't have to look up to see who it was — you heard the whirr of the wheels'.

She proved the right team worker for Mr Price. He knew when to apply the brake, and matched her adventurous flights with a quieter, steadying enterprise of his own. Their relationship was based on a respect for individual quality more enduring than any statutory definition of the rights of employer and employee.

E. Lucas and Co. remained a prosperous and happy community where output was not dependent upon rigid factory discipline. The secret of its success was genuine co-operation among all who had part in its productivity.

It was certainly not run by conventional rules. Mrs Thompson thought nothing of taking girls from their machines to watch sunlight on a spring morning flood the hawthorn blossom in the city gardens, or later, during the First World War, to hand out comforts and sing choruses when troop trains drew in or out of Ballarat station.

Yet no one suffered from the occasional breaks in routine. In those days, the regulations that governed management-labor relations were not tight enough to forbid such exuberance. Production did not drop, simply because 'the Lucas girls' — as they became affectionately known in Ballarat — returned from the jaunts to finish their day's work, however long it took. They enjoyed these exploits, as friend with friend, but their loyalty to their employer deepened because of them.

The Golden Thread strengthened.

over



Mrs W. D. Thompson

BY 1907, 2 YEARS LATER THE WORK FORCE HAD GROWN FROM 55 TO 220 MOSTLY FEMALE

WHEN Mrs Thompson joined the Lucas Company it was already, by the standards of the day, a large manufacturing concern. Within a couple of years, it was so seriously pinched for room in the leased premises on Armstrong Street that Mr Price decided expansion was essential. In 1907 the historic Phoenix Foundry and its two-acre site on Doveton Street, a stone's throw away, came up for sale, and the Lucas Company bought the building and part of the land.

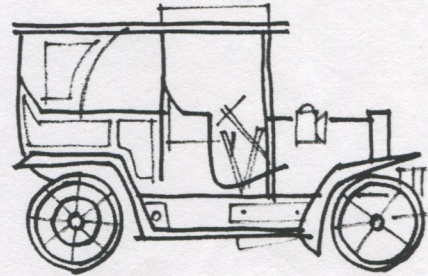
The old foundry, which had for several decades produced locomotive engines, was altered to provide 11,000 square feet of work space, and benches were installed to accommodate 160 powered sewing machines. ^{STOP} The pioneer shepherd Yuille would have been amazed to see what unlikely transformations little more than half a century had wrought so close to the site of his remote outstation!

* The Lucas organisation now employed 220 people and paid £15,000 a year in wages. It was an important factor in the industrial life of Ballarat city — a city busy creating a new kind of wealth to sustain its population as even the deep gold mines began to peter out.

The switch was not confined to Ballarat alone. New techniques and industries of the twentieth century were coming to all Australia. The character of the young Commonwealth was vastly different from that of the old, federated States. Australians

* Those of us who lived through ^{these} ~~these~~ years will remember that Lucas was held in highest regard as manufacturers of ^{VERY} high class broadloom ^{knitted} silk, rayon + nylon fabrics and makers of ^{high} class lingerie ^{and} ladies fashion ^{nightwear} gowns + clothing.

now to page 22



were working hard to lay the foundations of a modern nation — one still closely integrated with the British Empire but one which, for all that, had its own economic and industrial identity. More and more it aimed at self-sufficiency. Australia was at last passing out of the phase of serving as a gigantic sheep farm or a source of raw gold for the Old World.

Edward Price was acutely aware of the changed climate — aware that the business he managed must adopt modern methods of production if it was to keep pace with the growth of the community it served. In 1909 he visited Europe and America with his brother-in-law, Mr T. R. Morris, to study the latest trends in factory organisation and to contact suppliers of raw materials. The age of the assembly line and mass production was just over the horizon.

The firm prospered and continued expansion under the application of modern methods — methods which were modern, anyway, in gay Edwardian days, when Sarah Bernhardt and Lily Langtry were at the height of their fame, and Emmaline Pankhurst and her suffragettes were giving violent substance to W. S. Gilbert's observation that a policeman's lot is not a happy one.

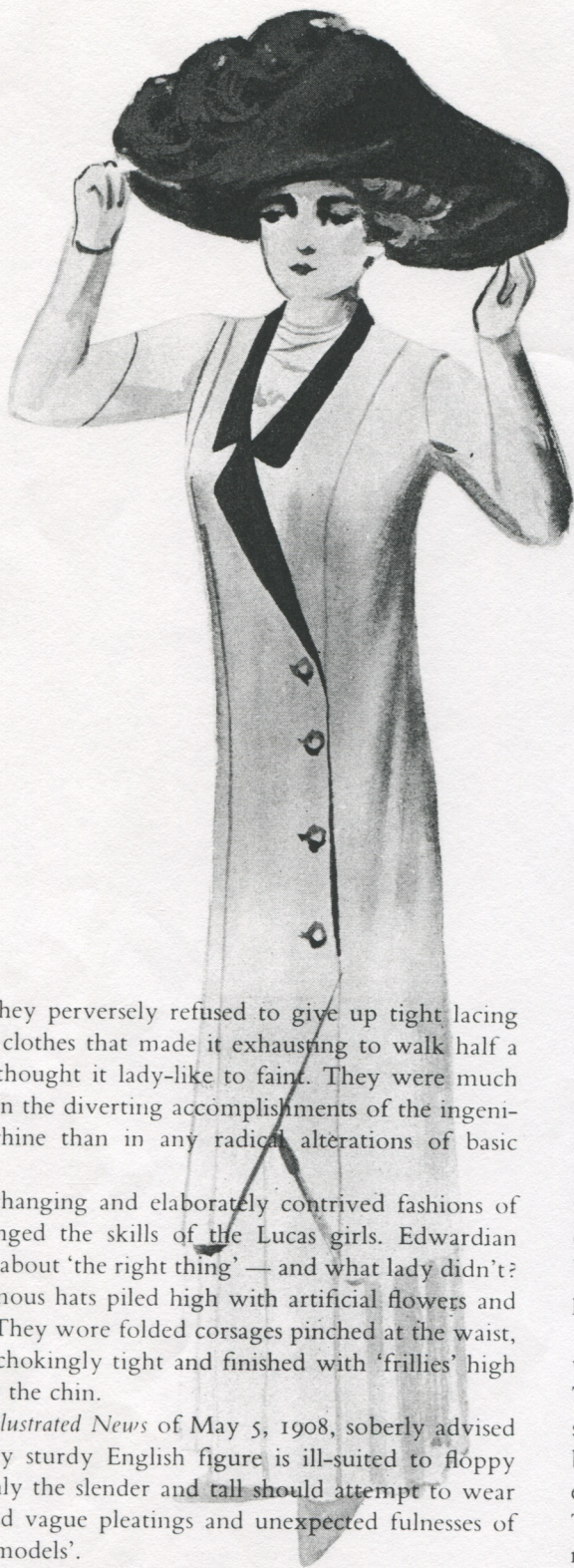
In the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century it probably took shrewder judgement to forecast next season's modes than it does today, when the styling of women's clothing

is infinitely more functional and comfortable. The period brought about a revolution in women's life and manners that was strikingly reflected in the changing fashions.

The nineteenth century had seen the emergence of the 'new woman', a creature impatient of the sex's long subservience to the dominating male and anxious to prove her right and ability to take part in the affairs of the world outside the home. Some courageous spirits adventured into careers in medicine, science and public service, and at the same time there developed the stirrings of a demand for clothing that would not hamper them in the performance of new activities. The 'Rational Dress Movement' of the 'eighties and 'nineties was an unco-ordinated campaign to encourage women to wear healthily practical clothes.

But women as a whole preferred to regard the enterprising few as freaks. They ignored the emancipators who urged them not to be slaves of useless finery, the doctors who warned that wasp waists and corsets were making them ill, the aesthetes like Oscar Wilde and the painter G. F. Watts who begged them to consider the grace of the natural female form.

By the twentieth century the reform movement was dead. Fashion for fashion's sake had won the day over good sense. Women played decorous tennis and even college hockey, rode bicycles, sat stiffly erect in 'four-wheelers' with scarves tied over



The old locomotive foundry in Doveton Street, 1907

their hats. But they perversely refused to give up tight lacing and a weight of clothes that made it exhausting to walk half a mile. They still thought it lady-like to faint. They were much more interested in the diverting accomplishments of the ingenious sewing machine than in any radical alterations of basic patterns of dress.

The rapidly changing and elaborately contrived fashions of the times challenged the skills of the Lucas girls. Edwardian ladies who cared about 'the right thing' — and what lady didn't? — favored enormous hats piled high with artificial flowers and ostrich feathers. They wore folded corsages pinched at the waist, with neckbands chokingly tight and finished with 'frillies' high enough to scrape the chin.

The *London Illustrated News* of May 5, 1908, soberly advised that 'the ordinary sturdy English figure is ill-suited to floppy draperies, and only the slender and tall should attempt to wear the undefined and vague pleatings and unexpected fulnesses of the new French models'.

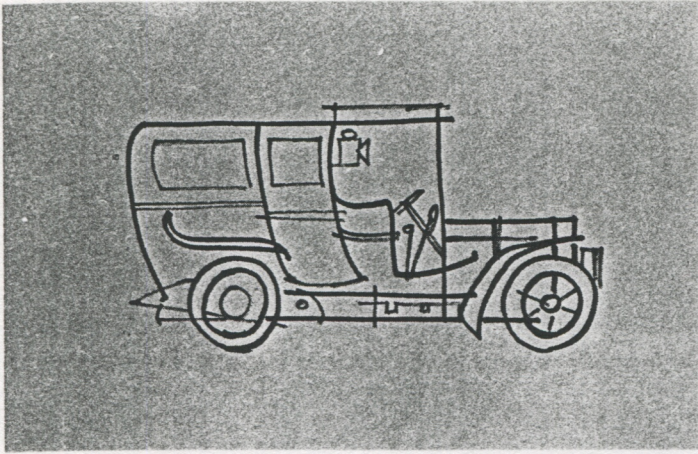
But what lady would, indeed, admit to possessing 'an ordinary sturdy English figure'? The floppies and frillies triumphed in a generation that was having its little fling after the repressions of Victorianism. When Edward VII died in May, 1910, the English speaking world plunged into mourning almost overnight. Gowns of black and purple were *de rigueur*. Miles upon miles of

material were hastily re-dyed to a funereal hue to cater for ladies of sensibility and patriotism.

When mourning went out, the cult of braiding came in — Russian braid, rat-tail braid, feather-stitch braid, cire braid, silk braid and metal braid. Clever needlewomen in factories like Lucas and Co. had more work than they could handle. When fashion smiled on applique and embossed work and all kinds of embroidery, specially skilled Lucas girls at first did the embroidery on ordinary sewing machines by removing the foot, placing the fabric in a frame and oscillating it beneath the needle.

The Lucas organisation not only survived the test of conversion to quantity production, but survived it on two levels. The quality of output held its high standard; and, though the size of staff grew steadily, employer-employee relations never became impersonal. Even before the war, a bonus system to encourage good work was successfully operating in the factory. The building was well heated during cold Ballarat winters by numbers of radiators, and hot water pipes were set at the feet of each machinist.

These were days of growing and militant unionism within the clothing industry, but it is highly significant that there exists to this day not one single record of a major industrial dispute in the Lucas Company. Recognition for Lucas quality was widening, and mounting orders required further building. In 1910,



five thousand square feet were added to the factory. A small trade developed with New Zealand and South Africa.

Then came the Great War — the end of the era of rugged individualism and Empire-building for men, the end of submissiveness and tight lacing for women; the beginning of the Age of Technocracy and the cycle of political and social revolution which has re-set the course of humanity.

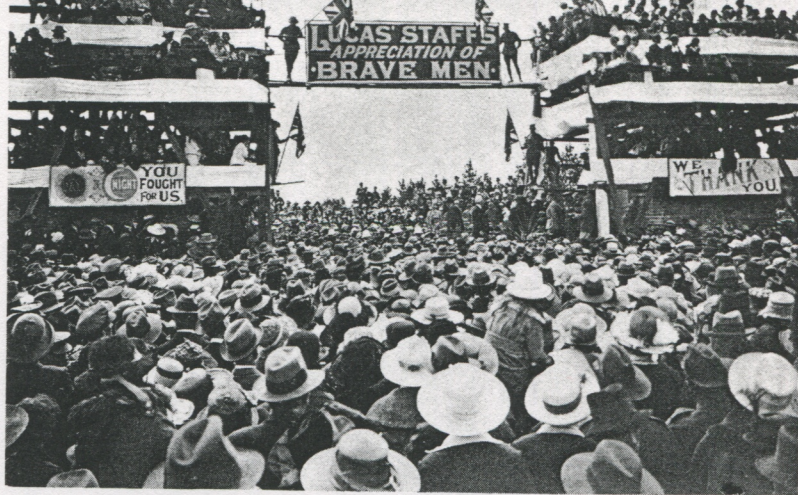
Eleanor Lucas was now nearing seventy. She had seen the cottage sewing room in James Street grow into a factory with 400 employees operating 300 high-speed machines for cutting, sewing, embroidery, fancywork and finishing. She had achieved the establishment of a firm whose standards had been moulded by her exacting personal integrity and vigor of mind — but the time had come to hand over control to those she had trained for the responsibility.

In 1915 Mrs Lucas retired. The business was formed into a limited proprietary company with Mr Price in control. Its founder went to live in Healesville West, next door to the orchard property of her daughter, Mrs Chaffer. She designed a house to accommodate visitors, and for eight years enjoyed entertaining a succession of Lucas girls and members of her family on holiday. The gallant little woman whose work had so profoundly influenced the lives of so many people died in Melbourne in October, 1923 at the age of seventy-five.

ETHEL THOMPSON WAS APPOINTED A DIRECTOR

To Page 22 X





Laying the foundation stone of the Arch of Victory, February 1920

THE formula that ensures sound relations between management and labor — comradeship in work and shared belief in community service — had long been in the possession of the Lucas organisation. During the years of the Great War, the formula was to achieve a good deal more than internal harmony in a factory coping with the strain of increasing demand and inevitable shortages. It provided example and encouragement to tens of thousands of people who had to fight their war on the home front — and gave comfort to thousands who fought on the bloody battlefields of Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and France.

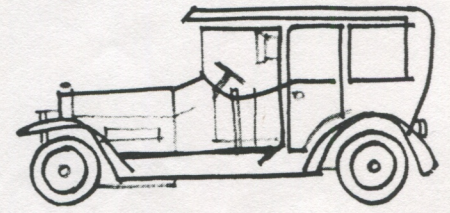
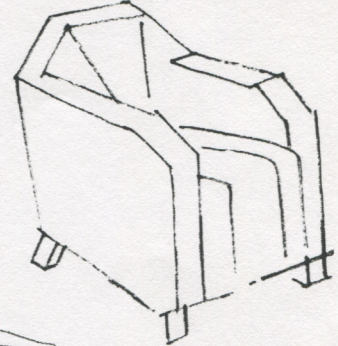
The men of Ballarat came of stock which valued freedom. Their fathers or grandfathers were the men of the Eureka Stockade, the historic clash in which miners bloodily defended their rights against armed authority. When the bugles sounded, they flocked to the colors from farm and forest and shop and office and factory. Behind them, their women closed the ranks and kept the wheels of industry turning. They saw to it that the new generation of diggers was honored and given every support that could possibly be contrived.

The Lucas girls were in the forefront of civilian Ballarat's effort to help the fighting men. A record of what they did is still solidly visible in the city, in bricks and mortar and living trees. Their concerted patriotic effort was probably unequalled by any other small working group in the country.

WHEN WAA BROKE OUT
1st 1914



The Lucas girls' football team, 1920



The girls' war activity was at first directed to keeping a YMCA worker at the front — which they did for three years — to sending comforts parcels, and farewelling contingents of soldiers. In 1917, however, a suggestion was made — reputedly by Mrs Thompson — that an avenue of trees should be planted to honor every Ballarat serviceman and nurse who enlisted. Each tree was to bear a plate engraved with name and unit, and the entrance to the Avenue of Honor was to be marked by a memorial arch.

The idea was sponsored enthusiastically by the Lucas girls, who with the firm's support raised a total of £10,000 to finance and maintain the unique monument, which is today a magnificent civic asset. The first instalment of money was the proceeds from a football match waged between the Lucas girls and the Khaki Girls of Melbourne. The home team, of which Mr Price's eldest daughter Elvie was a member, wore short pleated skirts, long-sleeved white jumpers and white knitted tasselled caps.

Ballarat's Avenue of Honor, planted over more than two years at a cost of £2,000, leads along the Burrumbeet Road into the city. It is nearly fourteen miles long and contains 3,912 trees. The Arch of Victory, the foundation stone of which was laid by General Sir William Birdwood (later Lord Birdwood), was opened by HRH the Prince of Wales on June 2, 1920. It stands as an impressive memorial to the Ballarat citizens whose sacrifice

in the holocaust of 1914-1918 assured their city an honorable place in the history of the young Commonwealth. Their compatriots who fought in the Second World War were later linked with them by two tablets set into the Arch and unveiled by Lieut-General Sir Leslie Morshead on November 7, 1954.

One of the firm's treasured possessions is a mortar board daubed with cement from the foundation stone of the Arch. Sir William Birdwood, Mr Price and Mrs Thompson signed the board, to be followed in later years by many distinguished visitors — the Prince of Wales, Sir John Monash, the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth), the Duke of Gloucester, Lady Haig, Sir Edmund Herring, Sir Dallas Brooks, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, Sir Leslie Morshead, Sir William Slim, the Queen Mother, Princess Alexandra, Mr R. G. (later Sir Robert) Menzies and Dame Pattie Menzies.

Apart from the specific projects for which they assumed group responsibility, the Lucas girls during the war raised an additional £1,400 for wartime charities, including £600 for the YMCA and £400 for Red Cross, and gave personal service to innumerable patriotic activities which could not be valued in money. Loyalty was, after all, a part of their way of life at Lucas: they were not the sort of people to question what it might cost to be loyal to the larger community outside the factory walls.

WIFE VOLUNTEERED WEEKLY DONATIONS FROM THEIR PAY PACKETS

PHOTO SHOWN ON THIS PAGE TO BE BASED AROUND

1914-1918

NOW READ FROM "LEST WE FORGET" FIRST COLUMN

THE STORIES OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS (MRS W.D. THOMPSON) MBE

MRS TILLY THOMPSON RETIRED FROM LUCAS IN 1926 (SEE PAGE 28 NOT COPIED)

DEATH 7 APRIL 1957 OR 1959