

Lockheed Factory in WWII

Fred Cutts on three separate occasions offered his garage workshops to the Ministry for other purposes but on each occasion was informed that the job being done was vital for the War Effort.

However, such is the confused communication during wartime that early one morning in April 1941, requisitioners arrived, broke into the workshops and began ejecting the vehicles and equipment into the rain. On being informed that the keys would have been available if they had called next door they said that they were provided with powers to carry on as they were.

J W Pymment & Sons hastily removed the hydraulic lift from the ground in the workshop and adapted the old Red Lion building which was used from then until the end of the war as a (garage?) workshop.

Despite such a disruptive beginning, relations between the garage and the Lockheed managers were always cordial and cooperation enabled many problems in the factory to be resolved.

The Lockheed Factory was established to make aircraft parts. Their trained staff were 'bussed in' daily from the main factory in Leamington and local people were also recruited for this new industrial experience. Local man Harry Warmington was a foreman; Dilys Lockyer and Josie McGuire also worked there. Charlie Downer, an experienced wrought-iron worker, was taken on as well. Other staff included Molly Franklin and Doreen Berrow.

Behind the garage there was a building designated as a 'Shadow Factory' with working machines already set up and a couple of engineers making sure everything could function in the event that the main factory in Leamington was bombed and the work could carry on in Campden straight away.

A new building of about the same size as the existing workshop was constructed at right angles to contain stores, tools, a canteen and other facilities.

The factory was closed down in 1946 and the garage reopened.

I was on nights and we were living behind the Library nearby. I couldn't get to sleep during the day for the noise coming from the factory, so I used to go up to Mr. Warmington's to sleep.

We laughed, sang, cried when we heard sad news, but we never stopped working.
Dilys Lockyer

A sort of invader was my Uncle Fred's fiancé who came up from the Vale of Evesham to work in the factory established in Cutt's garage to make parts for Lockheed Lightnings, my uncle being down in Bristol working at Bristol Aircraft. She became our lodger partly because it was felt that we might have someone billeted on us anyway and so we might as well go with someone who was almost family.

Bill Buckland

In the machine shop there were 50 people, working day and night in shifts. The women had to wear scarves over their hair for safety. It was quite noisy but we could make more noise with our singing! I was checking the thread of screws in another part of the factory. It was difficult to get time off.

Doreen Berrow