

WVS/WRVS Bulletin/Magazine

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The



Bulletin

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Queen Mary's Handiwork

Two of the six beautiful tapestry chair seats which Her Majesty Queen Mary embroidered in gros point and gave to Women's Home Industries for sale abroad. Lady Reading took them to the United States and they were bought for 10,000 dollars (£2,500) by Mrs. Edward S. Harkness for presentation to the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

The proceeds from the sale have been given by Queen Mary to the Queen's Institute of District Nursing.

Each chair seat is signed "Mary R." and dated, in needlework.

Among the most enthusiastic admirers of Queen Mary's handiwork were U.S. Customs Officers. About twenty of them clustered round when the chair seats were unpacked for Customs inspection on the New York docks.

Chairman's Successful Visit to U.S.A.

IN the United States the W.V.S. green uniform is known and respected, and soon after her arrival there for her recent visit the Chairman was hailed by a porter with: "I know your uniform. You see, I was a G.I."

A highlight of her three weeks' visit was the presentation of the National Achievement Award, presented for the first time outside the United States to a woman whose work for her own country was outstanding. The presentation was made by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at the Hotel Pierre, New York.

A dinner was given to which came Mrs. Roosevelt, the British Ambassador and Lady Inverchapel, Ambassador Warren and Mrs. Austin, Senator Morse, Mrs. Ogden Reid, Mr. Robert Sherwood, Mrs. Love Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Mrs. Ogden Mills, Miss Ferris, Miss Andrews, Mrs. Belmont, and many other distinguished guests. After dinner the presentation ceremony took place in a large ballroom, and special guests included members from universities throughout the United States.

The proceedings were opened by Mrs. Love Collins, who was followed by Mrs. Ogden Reid, who described her first visit to W.V.S. and her introduction to the work being done. Mrs. Reid added word pictures of Lady Reading in those early days of the Service.

Mr. Robert Sherwood described meeting an unknown woman at a large, truly British luncheon party where nobody's name was mentioned and he knew nobody. He went on to explain that the unknown woman (to whom he ascribed various virtues) was the recipient of the medal about to be awarded.

MESSAGE OF GOODWILL

Mrs. Roosevelt then spoke—in a way which would have warmed the hearts of all W.V.S. members—of a Service made by the dedication of so many women. She handed to Lady Reading a beautiful gold medal of superb workmanship, together with a message of such goodwill that the Chairman only with the greatest difficulty controlled her voice in framing her thanks and starting her address. Here are excerpts:—

"The Award I proudly receive to-night is for W.V.S. and the work it has done, for a service of over a million ordinary women doing every-day jobs in a simple way on a national scale. We were called into being at a time when the whole world was first becoming seriously conscious of the dangers which were confronting democracy, at a time when it was first fully realised that the ways we, the English-speaking peoples, believe the right ways to live were being menaced. In 1938, W.V.S. was just an idea, and in the intervening years we have had to build a machine strong enough to serve a nation in dire distress, resilient enough to adjust itself to changing demands, flexible enough to be applied differently in diverse areas and simple enough to be handled by varying types of people.

"From the mass of women who are W.V.S. we have learned many things, things which are sometimes forgotten, foremost amongst which is the fact that most right-minded people believe poignantly in democracy, but so many words have been spoken about it that they are mazed to know how to live it; so we have endeavoured to show how by serving one's own community, honestly and truly, and not just in word and talk, one can serve one's nation and through the nation, the world itself.

"We have been through much together, and the dangers, anxieties, and sorrows we have met have engraved their mark deeply on us and on our lives. There has been much suffering, many harrowing

experiences, heavy responsibilities, and an unceasing grind, which have produced positive factors.

"Friendships and understanding have grown on a basis of honest recognition of goodness and character. This came naturally when we were facing the same danger and were working for the same purpose, and we aim to preserve it now as each person picks up the threads of their separate lives, for we remember that the future does not rest only on Governments but is shaped by the action and often the inaction of every single citizen. The woman who gives the most is the woman who loves her community the best, and who realising the needs, faces the problems and does not shirk the issues. Peace requires as much hard work and as much self abnegation as war. It is harder to get this self-sacrifice in peace because moral fortitude is less often available than physical courage.

"We, the women of W.V.S., believe in great intangible things; we have faith in that which is right, we admire that which is good, we love that which is just. We belong to a proud nation, we ask no man's pity, but we want every man's respect.

"And so to achieve life as we think it should be, we go on building, with backs that ache, with worn out tools, but with eyes that have seen something of the sublime and in the consequent knowledge that we can undertake, and please God, we shall achieve even the seemingly impossible."

VISITS TO UNIVERSITIES

Lady Reading travelled through the Middle West and spoke at the Universities of Syracuse, Ann Arbor, and Cincinnati. As a result of her speech in Cincinnati the University there is raising funds to invite an English student to study there for three years.

She found the American Women's Voluntary Services working enthusiastically, especially on re-habilitation, housing projects, and the Personal Parcels Service.

Long-distance travelling and days crowded with engagements concerned with W.H.I. were tiring, but gave the Chairman ample opportunity for observing anew the American way of life and trend of thought.

"Friendship for Great Britain seemed to me a more real thing than ever before," she says, "Real inasmuch as it is born of conviction and not of a sudden outburst of 'hand across the sea,' or 'being allies,' or any of the reasons which have often resulted in bursts of Anglo-American co-operation. The youth of the United States are grand, and ready to tackle grim questions seriously. They have a real sense of dedication, and a tremendous power of application to the objective to which they decide to devote themselves.

"I am more convinced than ever of the urgent need for better and still better understanding between British and Americans. We must all work for this in every possible way, so as to be sure of the future peace of the world."

W.H.I. SAMPLES ADMIRER

Lady Reading took with her to the United States samples of work being done in this country by Women's Home Industries. She says everyone who saw the samples was enthusiastic about the idea behind W.H.I., and entranced with the quality of English wool and the standard of work. Good orders were received, particularly for knitted garments for children and women, and the American stores were also extremely interested in the tapestry work.

Lady Reading modestly disclaims any special talent for salesmanship, but says she knows much more about it now than when she sailed in the *Queen Mary* for America.

A W.V.S. member distributing plants to pre-fab. tenants at Deptford

Television Explains Garden Gift Scheme

APRIL is an important month in the gardening calendar, and a busy one for organisers of the Spring campaign of the W.V.S. Garden Gift Scheme.

A television item was a feature of the campaign. W.V.S. performers took a van load of sample plants to Alexandra Palace, where they were rehearsed in their lines and made up for afternoon and evening performances. A member of headquarters staff introduced Miss. Evelyn Steele (a W.V.S. member who organises plant distribution in Bedfordshire) and two pre-fab. garden owners, one of them the winner of Queen Mary's Challenge Cup for 1947 and the Lady Reading Cup.

The audience was told how the Garden Gift Scheme originated after Lady Reading met, in a London street, a little old lady bowed under the weight of a

lilac tree. She was carrying the tree from her bombed-out home to her pre-fab. Lady Reading then and there conceived the idea of country garden owners helping tenants of pre-fabs. by providing them with seeds and plants.

Miss Steele told how she collected gifts from villages and distributed them to pre-fabs. One of the W.V.S. party described the scene in the television studio thus :-

"The studio was fantastic," she said. "A room almost as high as it was long, full of paraphernalia ; wires all over the floor and powerful arc lamps suspended from the roof. There were three cameras on trolleys, and a microphone attached to a long, swinging arm. High above all this, in a glass enclosure like a ship's bridge, sat the producer and the sound and vision technicians."

W.V.S. Roll of Honour Pages on View

Two pages of the W.V.S. Roll of Honour, and a draft page of fictitious names, were included in the exhibition of the Council of Arts and Crafts at the Guildhall, London, last month.

One of the pages will be the frontispiece of the completed Roll of Honour. It shows Great Britain divided into regions, and is bordered with British Coats of Arms and Emblems in exquisite colouring. On the second page, names and citations of an imaginary County show the kind of lettering used in the actual Roll of Honour. Page three, which will be part of the completed book, consists of regional maps and

Coats of Arms and Emblems of England, Wales, Scotland, etc.

The Roll of Honour is being written and illuminated by Miss Clare Evans, a W.V.S. member since 1939 and at present W.V.S. Deputy Centre Organiser in Camberwell. She is a Founder Member of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators and an experienced calligrapher. Among her interesting commissions have been the execution of an Icelandic pedigree back to 1200 A.D. for an Icelandic doctor now resident in London, and a pedigree in book form to show the English ancestry of one of the present European kings.

Notes from Headquarters

MRS. BROOKS, of Bermuda, was a recent visitor to W.V.S. Headquarters. She was escorted on a tour of inspection of the Eaton Square Depot, Westminster Centre, Marylebone Clothing Exchange, Paddington Darby and Joan Club, and had tea at the W.V.S. Club in Cadogan Square. She was particularly interested in seeing the distribution of clothing, as she herself has helped with the sending of clothing from Bermuda to W.V.S. MRS. R. G. CASEY, of Melbourne, Australia, wife of the former Governor of Bengal, was another caller. MISS IRIS GABRIEL and MISS MONA KARFF, of U.S.A., members of the Silent Guest Committee and One World Association, were escorted on a tour of bomb damaged areas, lunched at a British Restaurant, inspected a pre-fab.,

and called at the Westminster Centre, and the Darby and Joan Club at Caxton. FRAU KOHLER and FRAU PREJAWA, of Germany, spent two days at W.V.S. Headquarters and touring London Region, were especially impressed by the decentralisation of W.V.S., which enables any new scheme to be put into operation without loss of time. Frau Kohler is a Councillor in the Kreistag of Osterode, and Frau Prejawa is head of the Welfare and Refugee Department of Hanover. They saw the Westminster Clothing Exchange; a pre-fab. house with a garden, a Darby and Joan Club and a Mothercraft Hostel at Clapham; Meals on Wheels at Paddington, and the Old People's Residential Home at Bromley. They also saw W.V.S. assembling and re-packing Princess Elizabeth's food gifts.

“Putting it Across”

WHAT is the first duty of a Speaker? Is it not to *compel* the interest of the people she is speaking to? So her first sentence, after she has politely paid the customary courtesies, “Madam, Chairman,” etc., should be arresting, surprising or unusual. How many times have you heard a Speaker talking to a W.V.S. audience, begin by saying, “I know how tired you all are”—Well, of course, if she is wanting people to do some special job, her efforts are doomed from the start, because the power of suggestion is a tremendous force. So think out your form of “attack” and make it startling or surprising.

Your most valuable asset is, of course, your own personality and you must use it so as to get your subject across, for personality can be either an effective or a non-effective factor of presentation.

MIND YOUR MANNERISMS

Your own natural mannerisms are a part of your personality; some may be the kind which will endear you to your audience and serve to bring you together in a kind of happy, intimate understanding, but some may be of the maddeningly irritating sort. You all know, probably, the speaker who prowls up and down like a caged panther; the speaker who thumps the table; the type who tosses a piece of chalk, or something of the sort, up and down, up and down, with the audience on tenterhooks lest it should fall and quite oblivious to what is being said! And perhaps worst of all the speaker who will persist in dropping the voice just at the moment when you are most interested, dropping it in such a way that the words are lost to you. We all have mannerisms and must use our own methods to find out whether they are pleasing or otherwise.

Just as an artiste uses a musical instrument to interpret the works of the masters, so you must use your voice as the medium through which you interpret your subject.

But *do* make the most of it. Experiment with it, raising and lowering the pitch, using this kind of vocal gymnastic as a means of emphasis. It is so easy to fall into the form of “intoning” which is an excellent soporific for your audience, and I know nothing so inducive to an inferiority complex, than a part of your audience placidly asleep!

All these points are important, but you will still fail to get it across if you don't remember to:—

1. Speak clearly.
2. Speak slowly, but quicken the pace sometimes.
3. Give your audience time sometimes to digest what you are saying.

And that brings me to the value of the “pause.”

You can use it as a form of emphasis, as an underlining, in fact (Mr. Churchill is a past master of this technique). And you can use it to give just that short space for mental re-adjustment which you need as much as your audience before passing from one phase of a subject to another.

There are other ways, too, in which you can use your voice to emphasise vital points. “Stress” is one; the use of it breaks the monotony of hearing one voice. Lowering the voice, but not to an inaudible point, is another. Generally speaking the unpractised speaker raises the voice to stress a point, whereas, provided it is perfectly audible to the people at the back, it is very much more effective if it is lowered. Repetition, too, is yet another form of emphasis; saying, in fact, the same thing twice over, but in different words.

The way you stand when you are speaking is very strictly your own affair, you know how you are most comfortable and what stance is most becoming to you, but do look *straight* at your audience not over their heads. A straight gaze is the best possible way to compel attention and to deter whisperers!

Change your position sometimes, because unconsciously the audience too changes position as you do, it rests them, and prevents stiff necks.

Natural humour is a gift from the Gods, but it *must* be used with discretion. You want your audience to go away remembering what you have said, not merely with a good supply of stories. And never, never, try to be funny if it is not natural to you. Nothing is so painful or embarrassing to an audience.

END WELL

Don't “Anti-climax.” Think out a good finish to your speech and leave it at that.

The value of question-time cannot be over-estimated, because very often points will come up which you have not covered. Be sure, though, that everyone hears the question which you are answering; you can do this by repeating it before you answer. Never snub or “score” off a questioner. The temptation to do so is sometimes great, but although allowable at political meetings, I doubt if there should be any exception to this maxim, because usually an audience dislikes to hear any one of its number made to feel uncomfortable, and becomes accordingly unsympathetic to the speaker.

Be patient, infinitely patient and always courteous; your audience will repay you by their close attention and their sympathy.

BE SINCERE

Finally, perhaps, the most important attribute of any speaker is sincerity. An audience is quick to sense if you do not really believe in what you are putting over.

If you are keenly interested yourself and you show this enthusiasm to the audience, you will engender a similar feeling in them, and even if you are not a first-class speaker your sincerity will get your subject across—always providing, of course, that the audience can hear you!

A good speaker is possessed of a rare talent, but should beware of mis-using such a gift. To play on an audience as on a musical instrument is a temptation and may lead to the most heinous of all crimes in any speaker, *going on too long*.

W.V.S. CLUB NEWS

Snacks are now obtainable at lunch time and in the evenings in the American bar of the club, and are proving a great convenience for those who want a quick lunch or something to eat before or after the theatre.

A bridge section has been formed and anyone interested may obtain full particulars from Mrs. Dumas, c/o W.V.S. Club.

The entertainments committee is planning regular monthly features. A Brains Trust has been arranged for April, with Mr. John Snagge as Question Master, and Lady Reading, Mrs. Agnes Mary Hamilton, Dr. Eileen Sibun, Mr. Roland Pertwee, Mr. Peter Cheyney and Mr. R. L. Jackson (of Scotland Yard) as members. In May there will be a discussion group and a dance.

Club members may obtain further particulars from the Secretary.

York Meals on Wheels

ALL SECTIONS of the community seemed to welcome York's first venture to help the old folk, and when the W.V.S. van set out with its containers of food, it was speeded on its way by an enthusiastic rally of supporters.

Arrival at the first house of call drew the interest of many good neighbours curious to know the menu, and obviously delighted that steps were being taken to give at least one square meal a week to old men and women who, because of rationing and inability to queue, are liable to receive insufficient nourishment.

The old lady who received, with gratitude, the first steaming meal of mince, potatoes, and vegetables, followed by a tasty pudding, was much photographed and said she felt like a Queen.

The last call of the day was to a dear old man who pattered downstairs to meet W.V.S. with his shilling ready, and his plates well warmed and covered with cloth. He wished Meals on Wheels workers continuing health and a safe journey.

While washing up after the day's work members felt that here was a job well worth doing, and in the very best traditions of W.V.S.

Typical recipients of Meals on Wheels are shown above. Names of the old people who need this help are obtained from Assistance Board officers, doctors, district nurses and hospital Almoners

Orders for May Bulletin should reach Headquarters 41 Tothill St., London, S.W.1 by April 20th

British Canteens Useful in Holland

IT IS ABOUT two years since the arrival of the first of the long line of Mobile Canteens which W.V.S. so generously gave to its sister organisation, the Dutch U.V.V., after the liberation of Holland. We here in Arnhem were so fortunate as to get the first two. The first arrived a few days before Christmas from Newcastle-on-Tyne, and was immediately put to work on distribution to the aged poor of loaves of sultana bread, a Yuletide speciality in Holland.

About a month later the second canteen arrived from Manchester. It was a beauty, one of the large type, and brand new. Its activities were varied from the first. To begin with the Mental Home at Wolheze, a small village on the edge of the famous landing grounds near Arnhem, was supplied with food because its own kitchen was destroyed in the fighting in September, 1944. This meant that from 15 to 20 large food containers had to be taken there every day from the Arnhem Communal kitchens.

During the bulb season the mobile canteens were used to distribute Easter eggs and daffodils to the aged, and as the bulb growers in the West had given us such tremendous quantities of flowers, we saved a canteen load of them for the Airborne Cemetery.

Then there were the families repatriating from Indonesia to be driven to the temporary Homes;

Relief Committees to be driven round the devastated areas; distribution of hundreds of layettes and cradles which, by request of Princess Juliana, had been collected for all mothers in Holland whose babies were born on or near the same day as her own youngest daughter; distribution of American food parcels which the Red Cross made available for T.B. patients in the devastated areas.

Besides all this there was real canteen work for small Army units working at the Bailey bridge; for the first large-scale Boy Scout gathering; for a District match of Fire Brigades; for a Government traffic count; for collections in aid of diverse charities; for the great International Four Days Sports Match held in this area every summer; and for the bi-annual P.T. mass demonstrations of approximately 2,000 performers. For this great crowd we rally all the canteens from all over Holland, and we even then have to work all out to keep abreast of the huge demand for drinks and snacks. The canteens in other districts have done much the same work as we have. One of them, stationed at Oosterbeek, the village in the centre of the Airborne battle area, made a trip to Switzerland to fetch a large quantity of medical supplies. It has since been transferred to Nymegen, the centre of the American Airbornes' landing area, and is now running as a mobile library to a large rural district.

Centre News in Brief

ACTON.—Torkington House Old People's Home, opened by Lady Reading in December, has 15 in residence. One old man, who had lived in one room for five years, with no cooking facilities, said: "For five years I prayed to die. Now I am praying just as hard to live."

BARRY.—This Centre hopes to reduce price per pint of soup-stew from 6d. to 4d. as expenses are decreasing now that practically all equipment has been bought.

BERMONDSEY.—Food leaflets distributed by wrapping them round orange juice bottles.

BROMSGROVE.—W.V.S. was represented at a meeting convened by the Medical Superintendent of the Barnsley Hall Mental Hospital, to arrange for a social club at the hospital. Red Cross and St. John representatives were also at the meeting.

BASINGSTOKE.—Plants and bulbs collected and sent to displaced persons' camp at Bedhampton.

BRENTFORD AND CHISWICK.—W.V.S. still co-operates with the Local Authority in assisting at children's clinics, weighing babies and filling in cards. Books for the Forces overseas collected, repaired and despatched.

BROMLEY.—Many applicants for the Land Army interviewed at W.V.S. Centre.

BRADFORD.—Food distribution continues to be a heavy task. During the past two years W.V.S. has distributed more than 100 tons of food a year, mostly in single 2 lb. tins.

BARKING.—W.V.S. were invited by the Mayor to help distribute gift parcels to Old Age Pensioners, of whom there are more than 2,000 in Barking.

BEDALE.—W.V.S. visit two blind boys at Lyndon Lodge School and take them out sometimes on Saturdays, giving them tea in members' homes.

CHESHAM AND AMERSHAM.—More than 700 magazines sent in three months to Hong Kong, and an appreciative letter received from the area organiser there. At Chalfont St. Peter a working party goes weekly to the Epileptic Colony to mend and darn.

CROFT.—W.V.S. sometimes take an elderly gentleman suffering from a stroke for the drive when they are delivering vitamins.

CHELSEA.—W.V.S. serve 47 dinners a week from the Mobile Canteen, and 60 more Old Age Pensioners are served with hot dinner in St. Luke's Hall on Mondays and Fridays.

COALVILLE.—At the request of the Local Food Office, W.V.S. Members who help with ration books will also help with distribution of food for old people.

CHISLEHURST AND SIDCUP.—Neighbourly sick-nursing has kept W.V.S. busy in recent weeks. One member, in addition to day work for W.V.S., night-nursed an old lady for ten weeks and shopped for an invalid whose husband is in hospital.

CHINGFORD.—The Darby and Joan Club is much appreciated. One of the old people said it was so nice to be able to have a little "chin-wag" in a warm room instead of on the corner of a street.

CHERTSEY.—The Old People's Clubs and Meals On Wheels have caught public imagination, and there have been many welcome requests for enrolment in W.V.S. This Centre does not accept resignations. If a member is not well, or tired, she is told to take time off for a year or so.

The number that come back again is surprising, often after years, and sometimes with several children. One volunteer came to the Centre when her first baby was three months old, as she wanted something to do while

pushing the pram. She was made Road Group Secretary. She now has four children, but she carries on with her group and is a most efficient street leader.

CHESTER.—The Children's Clothing Exchange continues to function weekly. One regular visitor says that her neighbours think she keeps her children nicely dressed and wonder how she can manage with such a large family. She tells them the W.V.S. ladies are very helpful.

CLEETHORPES B.—W.V.S. has two full-time and six part-time Home Helps, and the scheme is running well.

DENTON.—During two weeks W.V.S. members delivered personally 165 parcels of blankets and 88 parcels of food to the aged people. The parcels were given by the Tom Moore's Trust Fund.

DENTON.—In one month W.V.S. packed 850 parcels, each containing three tins of food, for the over-sixties who had not previously received a parcel. Personal deliveries to homes were made.

DEBEN.—W.V.S. provides 36 villages with about 11,000 pies a week. A quarterly balance of rural pies' accounts shows a profit, which is shared among the villages.

DEPTFORD.—Plants, seeds and bulbs distributed to many happy recipients.

ETON.—Pie Scheme, re-started in Farnham Royal under the Telfer Scheme. Dorney representative reports having grateful letters from old people who have received food parcels. Appreciative letter received from Greenwich Centre on receipt of plants from Eton.

EASTLEIGH.—W.V.S. busy with claims for supplementary clothing coupons for immigrants arriving from all parts of the world, including 20 Jamaicans. Another Welfare Foods distribution centre opened at the pre-fab. end of the town by W.V.S. in a general provision merchant's shop.

EAST RIDING COUNTY.—A shopping scheme has been started for aged and long-term patients in County Hospital, Driffield. On two days each week some popular articles are taken round the seven wards on trolleys. Orders for special requirements are noted and bought for the next time.

FAREHAM.—Early in the year the Local Authority asked W.V.S. to help with the Home Helps Scheme until the appointment of their supervisor.

HAMMERSMITH.—The Red Cross lent W.V.S. bookbinders a new standing press which has helped us to raise the standard of work. 28 books were rebound for the Du Cane Hospital, and 11 for the Shepherd's Bush Library.

HOLBORN AND FINSBURY.—A W.V.S. member climbs 1,500 stairs every Friday to collect National Savings. She has collected more than £7,000 in five years.

HIGH WYCOMBE.—25 bundles of magazines sent to Japan.

HALESOWEN.—There is no doubt about the general satisfaction with the Home Helps Scheme. Doctors in this area co-operate well and W.V.S. gets many calls from people leaving hospital after operations.

HENDON.—On behalf the Local Authority, W.V.S. investigates all applications for food parcels. This brings members into touch with old people, rich and poor, and means many new contacts.

ISLINGTON.—W.V.S. members attend Welfare Centres to weigh babies, distribute Welfare Foods, and help staff generally.

IPSWICH.—The Darby and Joan Club at Whitton is flourishing, the great feature being a "The Dansant," which is most popular.

IPSWICH.—A Mobile Shop visits Heathfield Local Authorities Institution for Old People attached to the Borough Hospital. Visits are made fortnightly and the old and infirm inmates enjoy the opportunity of making their own purchases.

KINGSBURY.—In addition to book repairs in general, W.V.S. is repairing children's books, to be sent to the children of Servicemen overseas.

KINGTON.—Two W.V.S. members are on the Guardians Committee and visit the public Assistance Institution. W.V.S. visited Hergest Road camp and are helping to make the soldiers' recreation room more comfortable.

LINCOLN.—Home Helps service filling a long-felt need here. Leaflets sent to all schools in the city resulted in increased activity at the Clothing Exchange.

LEEDS.—Forty-one old people, patients in St. James's Hospital, are visited twice weekly, and the matron has asked that other wards be visited to look after specially lonely cases. W.V.S. has a worker who knows the sign language, and therefore is able to converse with deaf and dumb patients.

LUTTERWORTH.—An old lady described the Darby and Joan Club as "a bright spot in a dull world." A notice in a local paper that they would be glad of help in entertainment brought a party of girls from the secondary school. They did an amusing play.

MIDDLESBROUGH.—There are now six old people's Clubs in the town. The Mayor and Mayoress and Councillors came to the first W.V.S. Club party, when about 400 people had tea. Local firms gave cakes, sandwiches, and lent crockery. The old people have talked of the party ever since. A member brings two fresh eggs to each meeting and these are given to old people who have a birthday that day.

MANCHESTER.—Successful party at Didsbury Old People's Club: an 80-year-old Darby played the violin and a Joan gave a short comedy sketch.

NOTTINGHAM.—Twenty-five W.V.S. members were stewards at a public meeting on atomic energy. Eight members acted as non-technical stewards on the Atom Train.

NORWICH.—About 40 old people are getting a weekly hot meal through Meals on Wheels, and more will get them when transport is available.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Our list of requests for Sitters-in is lengthening. An enquiry came from a woman who asked if there really was "any truth in the rumour" she had just heard about sitters being available. She and her husband are to have their first evening out together for eight years.

REIGATE.—After being inactive for two years W.V.S. in Reigate is in operation again. At the request of Surrey County Council W.V.S. established a small shop for the benefit of inmates of the County Institution. The shop sells sweets, cigarettes and tobacco, and expects to hand over the profit to the inmates' comforts fund at the end of six months.

ST. PANCRAS.—The second Darby and Joan Club has been opened, a large room having been lent to W.V.S. for the purpose. There are canteen facilities, and use of a billiard room for the Darbies.

SHAFTESBURY.—The Assistance Board has enlisted W.V.S. help on several occasions. Another village Welfare Food Centre has been opened, making eight in the district.

SEDGFIELD.—W.V.S. representatives have been busy finding lonely, aged and invalids eligible for gift parcels from overseas, and has re-packed parcels and

arranged transport for them. Messages of thanks have been numerous.

SOUTH LOTHINGLAND.—Nine W.V.S. working parties in Southwold, Blyth and Lothian areas alter garments for the County Clothing Depot.

SCARBOROUGH.—At the request of the Council of Social Service W.V.S. has undertaken serving of hot meals to old people. The Meals on Wheels service operates twice a week, the Corporation van lent to us for the purpose being assigned to other duties for the rest of the time.

SOUTHSEA.—A pleasing incident took place early this year. This Centre was presented with a tea service for six persons from W.V.S. Liaison Officers on behalf of the N.A.A.F.I. Corporation in appreciation of the splendid work done over a period of many months. W.V.S. are very proud of the gift, and it is no exaggeration to say that the tea tastes much nicer from these cups.

SOUTHPORT.—A member who speaks German and other European languages goes to the Ante-Natal Hostel for E.V.W.s to talk to the women in their own languages.

SCARBOROUGH.—Sixty eggs collected in a month for distribution to sick children. The wife of a Czech D.P. was lent a sewing machine to make clothes for her children before leaving for Canada.

TYNEMOUTH.—W.V.S., at the request of the Town Clerk, has been guide to a number of foreign visitors who wished to see the activities of voluntary organisations.

WHITLEY BAY.—Through a W.V.S. officer who has given practical help and advice, a number of young married couples who are living under difficulties have been saved from breaking up their marriages.

WELLS.—Patients are escorted regularly from the Mental Hospital to Wells and Bristol for treatment for various kinds. The Hospital Car Service is doing good work, about 4,000 miles and forty-seven patients a month.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY.—Membership of the Old Folks' Club is over 100 and growing. The Club meets twice weekly, and a chiropodist attends once a fortnight. The librarian of the County Library provides a box of books at frequent intervals, thus forming a sub-branch for the old people, some of whom find it impossible to make a journey to the library in bad weather.

WELLS.—A W.V.S. member had undertaken to escort patients at the Mental Hospital who come into Wells for dental or other treatment.

WEST MERSEA.—Pie scheme has been in operation for six years and is still working from local food office, about 1,400 pies being distributed each month.

WHITBY.—The Mobile Clothing Exchange visited villages of Cropton, Wreton and Gillamoor. Goahland, Staithes and Hinderwell continue with the Pie Scheme for the benefit of agricultural workers and the pies are taken from Whitby to the main shop in each village. Distribution is done by W.V.S. on rota system.

YEOVIL.—W.V.S. was represented at a meeting which appointed a committee to set up a Marriage Guidance Council.

YEOVIL.—W.V.S. Centre Organiser was invited to sit on the British Legion's Benevolent Committee, which meets fortnightly; this co-operation has been helpful. Means have been devised to keep Meals on Wheels hot by packing into empty chocolate powder cases and covering with rugs.

YORK.—The Godmother Scheme has been launched and St. Stephen's Orphanage children provided with godmothers. W.V.S. has been asked to start a similar scheme for the Grey Coat School.

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