

WVS/WRVS Bulletin/Magazine

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Madonna and Child with S. Elizabeth, by del Sarto

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W.V.S. BULLETIN

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(Official Journal of Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence)

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IN THIS ISSUE

"My Wish to You"	3	Nigerian Story	11
Hungarian Relief	4	American Teenagers Join Youth Club	12
Preparing for Christmas in Cyprus	6	Clothes for Egyptian Evacuees	13
Helicopter Flight	7	Speed, Efficiency and Method	14
The Sad and the Glad.....	8	Traveller's Tale	16
News from Wales	9	From the Centres	17
The Road to Bethlehem	10		

❁ "MY WISH TO YOU..." ❁

IF I had written my Christmas message to you some weeks ago, it would have been in a very different vein. Now as I frame my wish, I base it on a much more serious note than I should have done earlier in the year.

The tragedy of Hungary has made us all pull ourselves up short to take the time to think, and, in thinking, to take stock of the world around us. So much sadness, so much tragedy, and so much wonderful courage to preserve for posterity, principles of simple magnitude.

There can be no one of us that does not thrill to recognise the heights to which that courage has ascended, and my Christmas wish to you — my colleagues — the members of W.V.S., is that you may have, each in your own life and in

your own setting, a strengthening of your basic belief, which as it matures can result in just as great a courage, physical, mental and spiritual, as we have marvelled at in the tragedy that we have been witnessing.

May your work for others strengthen you in your outlook, may the exhaustion that results from the job help you to understand, and may the thoughtfulness that is yours, generate in you depths of belief and heights of faith, with which to face the future.

Stella Reading

★ ★ Hungarian Relief ★ ★

Tribute must be paid in these pages to the ceaseless work of W.V.S., side by side with other organisations, throughout the country to keep abreast of the needs of the thousands of Hungarians who are seeking refuge here. Constant consideration is being given to all aspects of their resettlement among us—clothing, temporary shelter, permanent housing near employment—and, perhaps most important of all, friendly understanding where no common language exists. The following brief account of the opening phases of relief must necessarily be “dated” by the time it appears in print, but we feel sure that readers will wish to know what is being done to meet this arduous emergency.

IT was inevitable that within a few hours of the plight of the Hungarian people being made known telephones at W.V.S. headquarters, regional offices and centres were constantly ringing with enquiries as to what help W.V.S. would be giving and how the public could use W.V.S. as a channel for their widespread and generous impulse to help alleviate the misery of the victims.

W.V.S. in its turn immediately offered its help in whatever ways it was most needed to the British Council for Aid to Refugees, the body responsible for receiving and settling the refugees in Great Britain and maintaining them until they are self-supporting.

At every stage of the operation of receiving the refugees W.V.S. has been able to give its help, with administrative and clerical assistance, with teams meeting the arrivals at the airports and at the harbours, with receiving gifts of clothing from the public, and with its distribution to the refugees. The work has varied from printing Hungarian notices to undertaking full responsibility for arranging local accommodation on behalf of the British Council for Aid to Refugees. Both in London and in the other areas where reception centres have been set up, W.V.S. members have worked untiringly at all hours of the day or night.

The volume of work has increased daily as the crescendo of need soared, first with the Government's announcement that 2,500 Hungarians would be received in this country and later with the removal of any limitation to the number of refugees to be given asylum, and the increasing rate of arrival.

At Blackbushe Airport W.V.S. teams from Hampshire and Berkshire have been

on duty to act as escorts, taking the Hungarians to the doctor, immigration authorities, etc. W.V.S. Centre Organiser, Winchester City, has written to say that one day when she and three other W.V.S. were on duty a Hungarian who had come to this country as a refugee in 1948 spent his half-day holiday from work in London acting as interpreter. During a lull between the arrival of planes the Centre Organiser talked to him and said how much she wished W.V.S. could speak to his countrymen in a common language. The reply, in good though somewhat disjointed English, was heart-warming: “Ah, but your actions and your kindness speak far better than words . . . so many of you always helping, and all for nothing . . . I think it is a very marvellous thing that you do, and it does not happen in any other country in the world.”

From the outset W.V.S. agreed that its centres throughout the country should accept gifts of clothing for Hungarian relief, and would be responsible for their sorting and handling so that they would be available not only for the refugees coming to Great Britain, but also for the requirements of the organisations dealing with Hungarian relief overseas. A large portion of the refugees who have come to Britain are men, and, as was to be expected, most of the clothing which has been received is for women and children, which has meant a great deal of very rapid sorting on the part of the W.V.S. centres to extract all available men's clothing to meet the immediate need.

A visit to Forbes House, unoccupied since the Diaghilev Exhibition, where clothing is being sorted for relief organisations is an amazing experience. Rooms, passages and stairways are crowded and

(Continued on page 16)

(Right) At a London County Council Hostel in Fulham which is being used as a reception centre in London, W.V.S. member Mrs. George Frank acts as an interpreter while a Ministry of Labour official interviews a Hungarian architect — one of the refugees for whom jobs are being found in this country.

(Below) Clothing and a bag of toilet articles being issued at one of the reception hostels in London.

Photographs by courtesy of
Fox Photos

Preparing for Christmas in Cyprus

CHRISTMAS presents, Christmas decorations, Christmas plans loom large in the lives of W.V.S. members overseas as they do at home. Christmas presents are top subject at every W.V.S. desk in all W.V.S. clubs. What to get for those at home, where to get it and how to pack it are matters of prime importance, and the W.V.S. girl has the vicarious thrill of being Father Christmas to a large and varied family. She shops and she packs, and if the praise for the right choice is directed to the giver, not the chooser—well, that's all part of the Christmas spirit.

Presents are the topic at the Club; decorations are the preoccupation in the Mess. Of course, the men love helping with the decorations, but in most cases the notions have been mulled over in the mind of the W.V.S. girl and the initiative comes from her.

Christmas programmes are also a matter for earnest thought and consultation, whether they are to include such an ambitious venture as a home-written pantomime, such a novel and seemingly unseasonal venture as a picnic and barbecue, or just the old fashioned Christmas party.

It will be a couple of months before the reports on the fun and games of Christmas come to hand; meantime our thoughts linger with the boys—and our fellow members of W.V.S.—in the Middle East. Recent reports of club leaders give an inkling of what goes on in the background. Pat Goss, for instance, casually writes "A weekly programme of events has been drawn up, but these are often interrupted by sudden duties."

Two Clubs have been visited by the Governor (General Sir John Harding), and Vera Huggard reports he spent some time in the lounge, which, by good luck (for this was an unexpected visit) was looking at its best. He asked questions and was particularly interested in the Modelling Room.

It would be an unusual report which failed to mention the musical side of

Club programmes. The Gunners apparently like their "Rock 'n Roll" while they play darts, and it has little effect on their accurate aim. Dorothy Brownlee comments from Polymedhia that "Rock 'n Roll" is Number One Favourite, but adds: "The boys show a great interest, but no silly exhibitionist antics."

The Royal Norfolks were lucky in picking up a show by the Tony Kinsey Quartet, which had to be dropped for more serious business by the R.A.F. Vera Burdis says the evening was a terrific success and the Quartet agreed they had never played to such an appreciative audience.

On the subject of music, one of the new girls in Cyprus had an amusing though disconcerting experience. Officially she writes: "At this distance from one's native land a record is much more than just a popular tune. It provides a link with those at home." That was official reaction to the never-ceasing gramophone. Here is her unofficial story: "My first evening on duty was an experience! I have never operated one of these high class long-playing machines which change their own records and play records of different sizes. Too late I realised that at least three different things have to be fiddled with before the aristocrat will adapt itself to records of varying size and tempo. I remembered two and forgot the other—that produced hiccupping sounds and pained looks from the boys. Or I forgot the r.p.m. and a languorous tune was played at break-neck speed in the wrong key. Then, in turning records over, I replaced the pin and replaced the records, on the same side! As I hurriedly tried to stop the repetition the machine stuck, leaving me with perspiration and humiliation dripping from every pore." We are happy to say that the gramophone and she have now come to amicable terms.

Male Fashion flash: Black nylon shirts are first favourites for off duty wear!—Report from a Cyprus W.V.S. shopping expert.

★ ★ Helicopter Flight ★ ★

FOUR W.V.S. from Horley had been serving teas and other refreshments to officials taking part in the Civil Defence aerial survey of the Crawley area, when an offer of a flight by helicopter was made to them. This is how they describe the experience:

"After tea was over one of the Home Office officials told us that the helicopter would be making one more journey with the Press photographer and there were three spare seats. Would we like them?

We drew lots for the three seats and after signing the usual "formality form" we bade everyone a touching farewell and walked quietly to the helicopter like three condemned prisoners going to the lethal chamber! We climbed in and adjusted our safety belts. Almost before we were aware, the aircraft was climbing straight up to about two thousand

feet. The "bubble glass" window made observation easy and brought the scene below very close and easy to distinguish.

We were up for about twenty minutes and the helicopter door was open during the whole flight to enable the photographer to take pictures.

Just as we had received a reassuring wink from the journalist who had accompanied us, the pilot decided to demonstrate the manoeuvrability of the aircraft, in other words, he gave us "the works". We went up and down and sideways, waltzing round and round and practically stood on our heads. After this hair-raising acrobatic we stepped down from the helicopter smiling, although maybe a trifle dazed.

We turned round to thank the pilot. "You W.V.S. are certainly tough!" he said as he waved us goodbye."

By courtesy of the Crawley & District Observer

Three W.V.S. members, (left to right) Mrs. H. A. Turner, Mrs. L. G. Snow and Mrs. S. M. Pearson, Centre Organiser for Crawley, who were taken up in the B.E.A. helicopter for a cruise round London Airport.

* * The Sad and the Glad * *

W.V.S. were informed by an Inspector of N.S.P.C.C. of a family in dire straits. The father had been away from work ill, but upon his recovery did not return to his employment. There was neither sick benefit nor wages at the end of the week. There were four children, their ages ranging from 5 years of age down to twins of 15 months and the 24 years old mother was expecting another. Conditions had got her down and she had become very depressed and in consequence had neglected her home and children. The twins were anaemic and very backward and unable to sit up. The W.V.S. member who called on the family found the flat filthy, and in the scullery was a tub of stale, dirty washing soaking and 53 milk bottles lay about the floor.

The Welfare Officer informed the W.V.S. that there had been no trouble with the mother until after the birth of the twins, when the condition of things became too much for her.

The W.V.S. member arranged with her own milkman to collect the bottles and while the mother and a neighbour prepared to go in the ambulance with the babies she washed and dressed the babies. She stayed with the older children while the mother was absent and used the opportunity to give them a wash and brush up. She found that the toilet facilities were primitive. The only lavatory was downstairs in the backyard, shared with the family below. There was no bathroom and only a cold water tap. There were flights of stairs immediately outside both front and back doors.

The next day the W.V.S. member persuaded the mother to allow her washing in the tub to be taken away and laundered in order to give her room to do the daily washing for the husband and children. When the washing was returned the next day dried and ironed, she found that the mother had cleaned up the house, done the rest of the washing and was in much better heart.

The parents and the two older children

[For obvious reasons we are not giving locations in this case.—EDITOR.]

had all been sharing one double bed. In the second bedroom there was a bedstead but it was not in use for lack of bedding. This the W.V.S. was able to supply and the children were able to move into a room of their own.

The Centre Organiser discussed with the housing manager the possibility of moving the family to more convenient accommodation and he promised to look into the matter.

* * *

NUMEROUS requests reach the W.V.S. for escorts for children. One of the most interesting came from the Chief of Police to supply an escort and accommodation in Newcastle-upon-Tyne for a small boy who was going to Denmark. The boy was due to arrive at 4.20 a.m., having travelled all night.

A very bright and cheerful boy, carrying a clearly-identifiable "new green checked suitcase", waved gaily to the W.V.S. as he walked along the platform and through the barrier. He was taken to the Refreshment Room and consumed biscuits and several cups of tea while he made the acquaintance of W.V.S. and the rather sleepy escort was rapidly brought to life by a vivid account of the various people he had met on the journey. By 5 a.m. the boy was safely in bed and asleep in an old farmhouse.

He was awakened at 11 a.m. and after breakfast was taken to the wharf and put aboard *M.V. Parkstone* (commonly called "the Butter Boat"). With great amusement he related how he had been instructed to look for the "Woman in Green" and wave his cap on arrival at Newcastle and on arrival in Denmark he was to wave a small Union Jack and his pen friend with whom he was going to stay would be waving a small Danish flag.

Readers are reminded that on and after January 1st, 1957, the yearly subscription to the Bulletin will be 3s. 6d. Those who wish to renew at the present rate of 2s. 6d. should send in their renewals immediately.

News from Wales

SO much has happened during the past two or three months that it is difficult to select items for news from Wales.

Not since the war years has W.V.S. in certain areas been so busy during August. When the Suez bombshell burst, for military operations in Llanelly, Swansea, Barry, Cardiff and Newport Docks and at a convoy rendezvous point in Monmouthshire, the moral support of W.V.S. mobile canteens was necessary. In spite of the demands of families on holidays, members in these places coped with day-to-day work and teams already reduced by holidays also kept a regular rota working at the Docks. During August Bank Holiday week Barry, for example, were on duty at the Docks from 6.30 a.m. until late evening every day, and this in a pleasure resort where many members are busy with visitors during the summer. "Operation Magic", as it was officially named (but "Operation Colonel Nasser", as it was more facetiously nicknamed) certainly showed that there are very many women who will find time to fit emergencies into the demands of busy home life.

The work on the Docks has continued intermittently throughout the autumn and organisation has been brought to a fine

art. Western Command just tells us where the job is wanted and the teams go into action, with the easy movement of long practice.

Also during August Bank Holiday week the Vale of Neath from Neath to Aberdare and the whole length of the Aberdare Valley was crowded with visitors to the Royal National Eisteddfod at Aberdare. In every village in both valleys W.V.S. were on the hospitality committees, and a magnificent effort to billet the thousands of Eisteddfod competitors and visitors seeking accommodation was entirely successful. In addition, Aberdare W.V.S. ran a Children's Corner on the Eisteddfod ground throughout the week and this proved as attractive a sideshow for visitors as it was for the children who enjoyed its facilities. Two Mexican women visitors to the town were unable to find accommodation and when the Aberdare Centre Organiser heard of their difficulties she readily offered them hospitality. A very happy friendship was the result and through her generous gesture, made in spite of all her own responsibilities during the week, the Centre Organiser and her family felt that excellent international relationships were established.

The Chairman cutting the tape at the ceremony when a chalet and rest garden were officially presented, on behalf of W.V.S., to Morriston Hospital, Swansea.

By courtesy of the
South Wales Evening Post

Many children who spent their summer holidays in Wales had a very happy time and, as always, their hosts and hostesses gained almost as much from their stay as did the white-faced little guests. There can be no greater reward than to see the colour coming into pale cheeks and the little limbs growing stronger under loving care and kindness. We were delighted to be able to help Region 9 in the preliminary arrangements for a very happy experiment which they tried for the first time. Forty-eight Birmingham children were brought to a permanent holiday camp established in a converted Malthouse on the Glamorgan coast near Southerndown. More will no doubt be said about the Camp by Region 9. But we, as the hostess Region, feel we should like to say how happy and successful the Camp seemed to be. Greatest praise of all came from the resident Warden and his wife, who could not speak highly enough of the perfect organisation of W.V.S. and the real happiness of the atmosphere.

A very pleasant little ceremony has taken place at Morrision Hospital, Swansea, where W.V.S. have been running a trolley shop for some years. Profits have been saved until enough money was available to present a chalet and rest garden to the two chest wards. Many patients spend long periods in these wards and a chalet and garden where those fit enough could enjoy the sunshine was felt by the hospital to be a most suitable gift from W.V.S. When the chalet was ready, the Hospital Superintendent felt it would be fitting to invite Lady Reading to present it to the hospital on behalf of W.V.S.

The garden is beautifully laid out in the form of a courtyard with a goldfish pond and a fountain. Overlooking the garden is a dovecote and the scene will soon be made perfect with fantail doves from the Chairman's home.

Another extremely happy Welsh Old People's week has come to a successful conclusion. Darby and Joan Clubs all over the principality have taken their own part in their communities' share of the week's festivities and there is a happy memory of parties, concerts, eisteddfodau, broadcasts and church and chapel services

to last until next year. All those responsible for the organisation were fully conscious that their care for the old folk is a lasting one and that a week of excitement is not enough. Every day of the year, between one Old People's Week and the next, many need to be remembered and helped, but the publicity gained during the festivities has done much to bring the problem of lonely old age to the notice of those who would not otherwise think about it. W.V.S. members responsible for Darby and Joan Clubs are delighted to be able to take part in the National Week.

At the time of going to press, the whole Region is working hard with the rest of the country to try to help Hungary in some tangible way. As with the work on the Docks, it is gratifying to know that W.V.S. training and the will to serve can go into operation so quickly.

The Road to Bethlehem

Written during a visit to the Holy Land

*Along the road to Bethlehem
The world goes passing by,
The monarch with his retinue,
The beggar with his cry,
The merchant and the preacher,
The soldier with his gun,
All go to render homage
To Mary's little son.*

*Along the road to Bethlehem
The shepherds tend their flocks,
The wild-flowers lift their fragrance
Among the scattered rocks;
Along the road to Bethlehem
The heart of man must sing
For the stony road to Bethlehem
Is the highway to the King.*

*And when we get to Bethlehem
We'll sing our songs of joy
And lay our burdens at the feet
Of Mary's little boy;
A baby in a stable
With hair as soft as down,
A monarch without diadem,
A King without a crown.*

Ivy Marks Trembath

Nigerian Story

HOW often have you received a letter saying, "Dear So-and-So, Can you do anything about the enclosed?" I had one such letter in June 1955, the "enclosed" being a request from the British Council asking for someone to visit a Nigerian girl of twenty-three who had arrived in this country to do nursing but in less than a month had developed tuberculosis and was in hospital in a very depressed state. I quickly gathered a few roses from the garden and set off to find that Henrietta had to spend the next three months lying on her left side and, as she had not been here long enough to make friends nor get used to English food and ways, she was going downhill instead of benefitting from hospital treatment.

It was not long before I was being greeted with a smile on visiting days, to be followed later by requests for face powder and toilet articles. In due course she was allowed to sit up and by Christmas was given permission to go home for three days if she had anywhere suitable to go. "Foster Mum" was called to the rescue. Could we have her? Would we have her? The hospital authorities went most carefully into all the details of sleeping and toilet facilities and, after satisfactory chest X-ray examinations for all the family, Henrietta arrived on Christmas Eve to spend the festive season in an English home. Not very festive for her, I'm afraid, as she had to spend most of the time in bed, but her fiancé had arrived from Nigeria at the end of November so he was able to come and spend the days with her instead of the brief hospital visiting hour.

In February, she was well enough to go to a convalescent home. It needed a great deal of persuasion on the part of the staff and myself as she was still shy of strangers, but eventually she went and was very happy there. We paid her one visit while she was at the home and twelve months after she was first taken ill she was pronounced cured and left to spend a few weeks with her brother in

Bristol.

The next thing was the wedding and this was arranged for the end of August. As foster mother, I was asked to represent her own mother in Nigeria, so my husband, daughter and I were invited to the registry office for the civil ceremony at 9.30 a.m. to be followed by a blessing in Church (in the heart of Kensington)

Some of the wedding party

and later to cakes and wine at the bridegroom's lodgings. My daughter had previously been asked to make the wedding cake—"Not white-coloured like you had at Christmas, please."

About six Nigerian guests were invited to the wedding, most of whom were in national dress. The bride wore a multi-coloured skirt swathed round and folded over at the waist and a white magyar blouse striped with black. Her head-dress was an elaborate arrangement in the form of a turban in stiff material with ends erect. White sandals with a little cluster of flowers and a smart black handbag completed the ensemble.

The bridegroom and best man each wore matching trousers and caps, the bridegroom's being purple and black squares bordered with white, and the best man's being striped. Both wore a full surplice-like tunic in white cotton broderie anglaise. The bride's brother had

a much longer outer garment of coloured cloth with a bright red cap beautifully embroidered with gold thread—possibly a sign of rank.

The reception was not until 4.30 p.m. About fifteen Nigerian guests were already assembled in the room when we arrived and records of native music were being played on the radiogram. This made conversation rather difficult, but I gathered that one of the males was learning the manufacture of boots and shoes, another studying printing in all its branches, a third was travelling in electrical goods and several were taking law or medicine. The bridegroom's subject is building construction. They all expect to be in this country from three to five years and are tremendously keen on their

courses. As more people arrived we were asked if we would like to taste real Nigerian food and to complete the experience we accepted a plate of very highly seasoned rice cooked in oil flavoured with extremely hot pepper, imported from Africa specially for coloured people, the mound being topped with a piece of fried meat, the fear all the time being that the lot would shoot off into one's lap. The correct method, it seemed, was to eat the rice first, then pick up the meat in one's fingers. Very simple when one knew how!

So what started as a sad story had a happy ending. Just another job for the W.V.S. Incidentally, I am keeping in touch with my "foster daughter".

H. P. White, Wandsworth.

American Teenagers Join Worlington W.V.S. Youth Club

★
WHEN the Annual General Meeting of Worlington Youth Club, run by W.V.S., was planned for September 26th, it was decided that the American teenage children living in the village should be invited. (Previously, American children in the village had been too young.) The parents were visited and told about the Club, and one American, the mother of eight children, asked if the Club were "really democratic". We felt we could honestly describe it as *very* democratic.

On the evening when the meeting was to be held, local children called for the Americans and brought five of them to the village hall. The visitors were most interested in the proceedings and they all decided to join. They now come weekly to the Club and appear to enjoy themselves enormously.

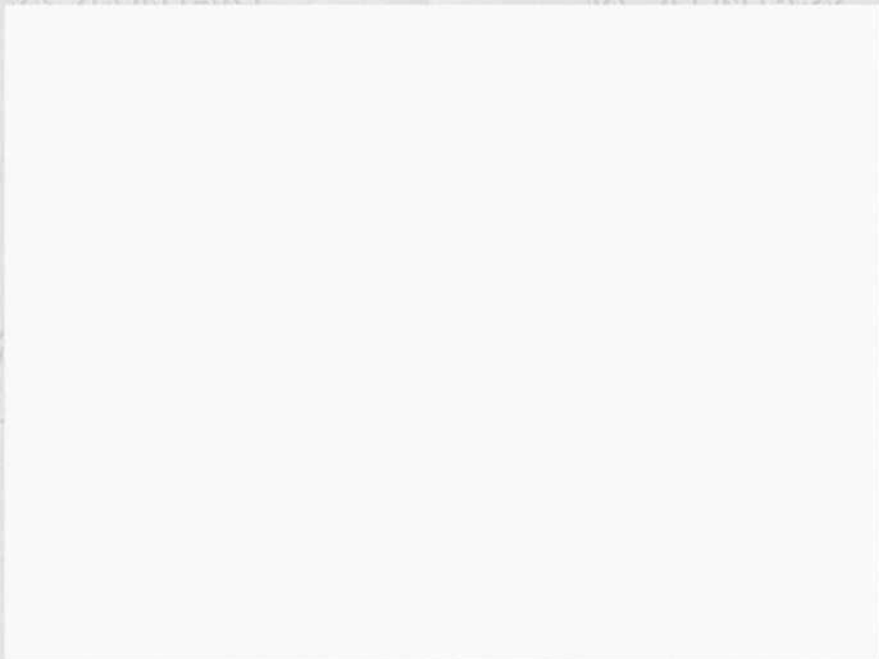
Susan, aged 14, is very distressed because her parents are shortly moving to married quarters at Lakenheath. She says she wants her mother to bring her to Worlington Youth Club each week. When asked about American youth activities, Susan said, "There's nothing as good as this—there is 'teen town', but

★
there's only dancing there". When we said we had heard that there was a Youth Club at the base, Susan said, "But that's like a Church, and you have to read the Bible". The Americans like the games at Worlington—table tennis, darts, draughts and billiards, which seem to be new to them. What these teenagers really appear to enjoy most is being able to please themselves about what they play, and how long they play.

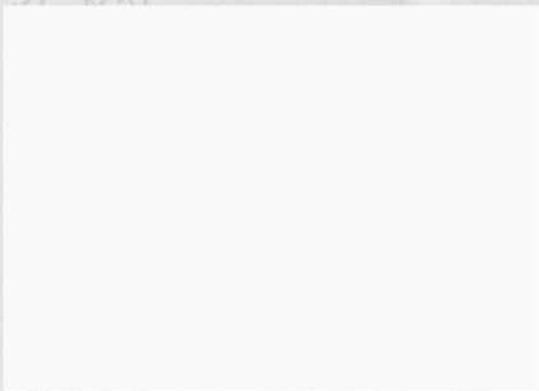
The Americans have added a considerable amount of leaven to the Youth Club. They bring their own gramophone records, including "Rock around the Clock", and are trying to teach Worlington to Rock 'n Roll, but the village is rather inhibited and doesn't show much aptitude for this kind of dancing!

The Worlington children are really very good with the Americans, and are most helpful in teaching them to play the games. Sometimes the English are a little puzzled, and then they say rather solemnly, "We have to remember they are different from us". No doubt the Americans are equally puzzled by the English.

Clothes for Egyptian Evacuees



W.V.S. members in the Midlands distributing clothing to evacuees from Egypt
By courtesy of the Staffordshire Sentinel



In Remembrance

*Lady Reading planting a cross
in the Garden of Remembrance
at St. Margaret's, Westminster,
on behalf of W.V.S., on November
9th, the Friday preceding
the Day of Remembrance.*

By courtesy of Sport & General

Speed, Efficiency and Method

Being a further account of the Inspection on Horse Guards Parade.

THOUGH the inspection was not due to begin until 2.30 p.m., Horse Guards Parade was buzzing with active preparation from 9 o'clock on the morning of October 24th when members of the W.V.S. Civil Defence teams which gained the first six places in the inter-zonal competitions arranged earlier in the year by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food drove their convoys into position on the site.

Some members who had travelled long distances to take part in the inspection had been given hospitality the night before by W.V.S. members in London: members from other teams which had taken part in the competitions, but whose vehicles were not to be on parade, arrived during the morning and were drilled in their allotted places.

The main part of the inter-zonal competitions had been devoted to a kitchen test, which included unloading the equipment, setting up the kitchen, boiling three gallons of water in Soyer boilers, peeling $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of potatoes, preparing sandwiches, and cleaning and re-loading the equipment. (In emergency 3,600 snacks an hour can be served by each squad.) Emergency kitchens therefore played an important part in the display on October 24th. Winchester

team, the runners up, who gained only 28 fewer marks than the winners, Worcester, laid out their kitchen during the morning, making a very neat display of Soyer boilers, trestle tables, floor boards, outsize stirring spoons, urns and all else that goes to efficient emergency feeding.

When everything had been made ready, just before noon, all the participants went to Tothill Street, where the luncheon operation was in full swing at headquarters. Seven stewards marshalled parties of the 308 people to be fed through entrances previously allocated to holders of different coloured tickets, thence to improvised dining rooms dotted about the third and fourth floors. Thanks to many willing helpers from headquarters staff and London Region, there were no queues and everyone was speedily served with a sit-down luncheon. Refreshed and relaxed, they were back in their places on Horse Guards Parade by 2 o'clock.

Half an hour later Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother arrived and was greeted by Lady Reading, W.V.S. Chairman, the Rt. Hon. D. Heathcoat Amory, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Rt. Hon. Gwilym Lloyd George, Home Secretary.

The Winchester team laying out their kitchen on the morning of October 24th.

In the tests a very high standard of driving and handling of vehicles was required. To begin the display, therefore, the Sutton Coldfield and Leicester teams drove their vehicles smartly on to the parade ground, manoeuvring them into position with perfect precision. Then the Queen Mother came down from the dais and inspected each team in turn, speaking to many of the members as she passed along the lines. She showed great interest in the equipment laid out by Winchester.

Next, on the opposite side of the ground the Worcester team swiftly demonstrated the unloading of their stores van. The members of the team worked without any trace of fuss or flurry—indeed to the onlookers they seemed to move in almost a leisurely way, but within 5½ minutes their kitchen site was set up—though fifteen minutes had been allowed for this part of the display—thus giving visual proof of the speed, efficiency and method that had gained them first place in the tests and the Trophy which the Queen Mother afterwards presented to Miss Bradley, W.V.S. Convoy Organiser, and Mr. Bourne, Convoy Officer.

Her Majesty then drove away and the great occasion was over. The Food Flying Squads returned to their bases, to be ready for any future emergency that may arise—for it should be borne in mind that the six Squads which were used for

H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother inspecting the emergency kitchen which she watched the Worcester team set up. She is speaking to Mr. Bullen, the only male member of the team

this display had all been in operation during the East Coast floods, when many of the present members of the teams accompanied them.

The winning Worcester team with the Trophy.

Photographs by courtesy of P.A. Reuters-Photos Ltd.

Traveller's Tale

ALTHOUGH this goes back to 1945, I submit it for the competition, as coming from one of the pioneers in mobile overseas service with the British Liberating Army.

After many vicissitudes, my Irish mate and I, on an American canteen van (gift from U.S.), found ourselves at last bound from Bad Oyenhausen, in Germany, to Soltau, en route for our eventual posting. There were, of course, no maps in those early days, but we did get some kind of routing just before we started. After driving many miles we came upon a wet cardboard sign **BRIDGE DOWN**, so we stopped to consider. Soon an armoured car came along, and the RECCE men in it told us there was a ferry which they were using—so we followed. Miles and miles of very muddy war-pitted “road”, and then the ferry (over the Aller, I believe). The RECCE crossed with ease and waited for us on the far bank. My mate had been driving the last 20 miles or so,

but now handed over to me, as she knew I had driven classy cars on reliability trials. Well, perhaps she was right. I don't know. But I took over and we slithered up the muddy ramp on to a raft-type ferry.

The other side was far worse. The RECCE, of course, had a “track” vehicle, which will go over almost anything, like tanks do, but I just had to grip the steering wheel and accelerate madly, hoping for the best. We did it, by dint of slithering like a small yacht tacking and veering, but more by luck (and prayer) than judgment.

Then the RECCE waved us farewell, and we proceeded for another 30 or 40 miles of nothing but potholes and arrived at Soltau (but not expected) at dusk—only to find a signpost at the end of our journey, pointing the way we'd come, and saying **NO ROAD!**

—Kathleen E. Robeson, ex B.L.A./
B.A.O.R.

Hungarian Relief

—(continued from page 4)

piled with packing cases, sacks and paper bundles. Benches are covered with the clothes being sorted. “Pigeon holes” are stacked with neatly parcelled garments tied like with like in sets of five and ten. It is the same picture that every Centre knows on a smaller scale. Hundreds of helpers are kept busy on an apparently unending task. The benches are never clear, for as fast as ten pants, ten vests or five overcoats are tied up, several more of everything are deposited ready for sorting. It seems unbelievable to the uninformed spectator that all will be needed — but if the gifts seem inexhaustible, so does the need.

And now all over the country W.V.S. are dealing with the offers of hospitality and of accommodation which have poured in so generously. They realise the magni-

tude of the task which lies ahead, of settling the refugees permanently into their new homes. Most of the refugees, as we have already said, are men, most of the offers of accommodation originally received were for women and children, because the impression at the time when these offers were made was that it would be mostly women and children who would come to this country. For many months ahead W.V.S. will be helping to settle the refugees into their new surroundings, and helping the people of the community in which they will be living to deal with the various problems which may arise.

This Christmastide it must be our greatest wish that those in need shall find room—and welcome—at the Inn.

From the Centres

ANDOVER. During September 1,268 men used the Services Club—an increase of about 200 on the previous month. On September 12th the Mayor asked us to provide a meal for 130 airmen after a ceremonial march-past through the town. A splendid number of members rallied round to prepare the tables and the food. A plate of salad and meat was provided, with a roll and butter, tea and cakes. Even when 158 arrived instead of the anticipated 130 we were not defeated and it was places we were short of, not food. The Mayor and Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Jordan congratulated us on our efforts. In the evening 114 people returned to the Club for the usual games and music. Of these 114 people, 30 were U.S.A. Service men with their wives and children. Food was paid for by the R.A.F. Aid.

BIRKENHEAD. A lady called at our Centre quite distressed. She said that her daughter, who had died recently, had been making a basket while she was ill. Could we possibly find someone to complete it? One of our members volunteered to do this, and the mother now has the finished basket.

BROADSTAIRS. The sewing machine offered as first prize for the best entry of garments in Region 12 Make and Mend Competition was won by Broadstairs. Another competition is being held again this year.

CARLISLE. Our Clothing Staff is always busy. Among the large number of people helped during October was a young man with a splendid record in the R.A.F., who was highly recommended by his Welfare Officer. The man had led a wandering life since his discharge and had a long record of misfortune, but he had a good job waiting for him, and we were glad to help him. Another was a little girl who had recently lost father and mother in the same week, and was being adopted. She needed a complete outfit in order to go nicely equipped to her new home, and this we were happy

to supply. A third case was an old man suffering from heart disease, who lived in an attic and was unable to negotiate the steep staircase more than once a day, when he went out for his daily diet of fish. He had no blankets—just old coats—on his bed. We gave him two pillows and two blankets so that he might be more comfortable, and we also supplied his need for underwear.

CHEADLE & GATLEY. We have increased the number of W.V.S. helpers in the Blind Club, which continues to give pleasure to sighted and unsighted members. We had a very happy afternoon on October 4th, when 16 primary schoolchildren came to the Club with their headmistress. Each brought a basket of fruit from their Harvest Festival, and gave one to each blind member.

DALTON-IN-FURNESS. The Centre Organiser has been teaching an arthritic lady to knit, which has gradually enabled her to make use of what were once crippled and useless hands. She has now enrolled her as a W.V.S. member and she works in the W.V.S. office filling in Calling Out Cards for the Blood Donor Sessions. This has enabled her to feel that she is of use to the community and has cheered her immensely.

EAST SUSSEX. Welfare Foods are distributed at 17 distribution centres and two members each year take supplies of baby foods to nine hop-pickers' camps, a most interesting and amusing experience. A large taxi is loaded with foods and W.V.S. They drive round the camps in convoy with the butcher, the milkman and the Vicar. The driver rings a dinner-bell as he drives and W.V.S. hang out of each window waving tins of milk and bottles of orange juice. They have many friends from Stepney who come 'hopping' each year, including the Pearly Queen.

ELSTREE R.D. The W.V.S. was asked to supply blankets for a family whose house had been damaged by lightning during a violent thunderstorm, and who had been moved into another house by the L.C.C. until their own house was habitable. The County Clothing Officer supplied the blankets to a very appreciative household.

FULHAM. The Mayor of Fulham made a presentation of twelve folding tables to Fulham W.V.S. at the Mayoral Green Darby and Joan Club. The tables had been made by a Borough Councillor and his son. Six of the tables are being given to the Mayoral Green Club and the others to W.V.S. for use in other clubs.

GRAVESEND. W.V.S. were asked if a member could go with a young woman to buy secondhand furniture to the value of £26. The N.A.B. Officer thought the money might not be spent wisely, as the young woman was ill and epilepsy was suspected. In 3½ hours' shopping, the necessary purchases were made and receipts obtained for the N.A.B. The W.V.S. member who had given the help needed was subsequently invited to tea and to see the home for which the furniture had been bought.

GRIMSBY. An old lady lost her budget-ig and very much wanted another. We put a notice in the local paper and only by the exercise of tact and diplomacy did we avoid having an aviary for the old lady and for W.V.S.!

LOWESTOFT. On September 1st, at 9.40 p.m. we had a call for clothing, including underclothing, trousers, jackets, socks and shoes, for nine Frenchmen who had been recovered from the sea after their ship had foundered. Within half-an-hour members of our clothing department were very busy fitting out the Frenchmen, none of whom could speak a word of English, and many laughs resulted. Later we received a letter of thanks from Mr. J. Kirby, the Port Missioner at Lowestoft.

LUNESDALE R.D. On October 9th the County Organiser for Lancashire opened the Caton Darby and Joan Club—the first rural club of its kind in Lancashire. There are two old people's Homes in the district and the members were very keen to join this club and meet new acquaintances.

NORWICH. The Spastic Children's Clinic is going from strength to strength. Good equipment is being collected and the children are showing a marked improvement since the Clinic was opened. The mothers have an opportunity to meet and discuss their problems, and they can leave the children at the Clinic in safety while they do their shopping.

POOLE. We have undertaken to staff the Canteen three nights a week at the Canford-Poole Boys' Club. Tea, soft drinks, sweets and light snacks are served. The principal demand is for baked beans on toast, and when we arrive there are always many enquiries "Are we having baked beans, Miss?". The title "Miss" is applied to us all! Much interest was displayed as to the meaning of the initials W.V.S. One lad spoke of one of our members as, "That woman" and the Warden said, "That lady, please". "Huh," replied the boy, "she said herself that they were the Women's Voluntary Something". Another boy listened patiently to our explanation of voluntary service; then he said, "No pay? Proper Joe Soaps, aren't you?" It is quite a tough club. The Warden is very grateful as he is now able to give more attention to the boys and has asked us to try to find jobs for them to do voluntarily, such as wood chopping for old people.

SLOUGH. We were asked by a young man if we could trace a friend of his with whom he served in Singapore. He could not remember his surname but knew his Christian name was Bob and that his mother was a W.V.S. member. He provided a photograph. After thinking about this for a couple of days the Deputy Centre Organiser remembered hearing a member mention about two years ago that her son was just off to Singapore. Round to the house she went armed with the photograph. She found that her "hunch" was right. She was able to pass on the address to the young

Good wishes to Members everywhere at home and abroad. A special greeting to Mary and Billie Burgess, who should just have arrived on Christmas Island, suitably equipped with plenty of desert island discs and the script of a pantomime to add to the entertainment of the troops and scientists temporarily settled on this atoll 3,500 miles from the nearest mainland.

man. He was being married and wanted "Bob" to be his best man.

TAVISTOCK. On the occasion of the Civil Defence Reception and Supper held at the Town Hall, Tavistock, on October 2nd, the Welfare section of the Civil Defence Corps cooked a meal for 300 people, on an Emergency Cooker installed out of doors near the Market Gates. The food was put into heated containers, carried into the Town Hall and served in 20 minutes. The sausages made their appearance to the sound of "The March of the Civil Defence Service", played by the Plymouth Royal Marine Orchestra.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS. W.V.S. were called upon at 9 p.m. to supply a meal to fourteen firemen who were fighting a large fire at a Southborough farm. The Emergency Team were called up and the local grocer warned that supplies would be needed after closing time. A hot stew was cooked in the meals-on-wheels kitchen and was taken to the farm in the van, together with sandwiches and two urns of tea for the next shift. This was the first time our emergency arrangements had been put into operation. The Fire Brigade expressed great appreciation for the help given.

WESTMINSTER. A young lady called at the Centre to offer her services as a shorthand typist for about five weeks. She said that she was a secretary on sick leave and wished to do some voluntary work until she returned to her own job. They were delighted to receive the offer and in the course of conversation we asked her why she chose the W.V.S. for her "good deed". She replied that during her 14 months in hospital the W.V.S. had been very attentive to her and she made up her mind that on recovery she would do something to help them.

We regret that the work done for the Lightships, recorded in our last issue, should have been attributed to Cambridge. The scheme originated in Harpenden in 1953 and Mrs. Garner, W.V.S. Centre Organiser of Harpenden, and her staff have been working hard on it ever since.

Homeless

Late decorator, self-employed, age 79.

He had left his pension book in his coat, which he had lost. The W.V.S. arranged for the payment of his pension, found him lodging and sent him to the Luncheon Club for his mid-day meal.

Homeless—and who knows why?

He is now too old

To tell his tale, and it will never be told.

So neat and clean, a tie

Dark blue, and at his throat

A white collar. He had lost his coat

When he had a stroke in the street.

They took him, he is not sure where,

*And when he was better, they put him
into a Home,*

But he was not happy there

So he began to roam,

*Trying to find a place that would suit
his mind,*

Where the people were kind,

*And he could stay for a while and feel
at ease.*

*"No, Madam, I never married, I have
no kin,*

*I am the last of them all." Time or
disease*

*Had taken them all, and left him,
stooping and thin*

*To wander London, because he did not
know*

What to do, or where to go,

Homeless, confused, and old,

And his tale will never be told.

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