

WVS/WRVS Bulletin/Magazine

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BULLBUIN

Fun for all and a rest for mothers at Yardley Wood Mothers and Babies Club
Birmingham Post & Mail

L



WVS Bulletin

BORN ON A BALCONY

YOU could hardly call it a Pet. A Pest, most farmers would say. Yet since it was born and bred on our balcony, high above a busy street in Westminster, our hearts warmed to the little thing.

Not that it returned affection; indeed, quite the reverse. And surely its mother would bear this out. But that

is the end of the story.

The beginning, at least as far as our sleepy heads were concerned, was a tremendous amount of billing and cooing at dawn. Bars in seven-four time, repeated *ad lib*, I decided.

Then came the twigs. (I should mention we have two windows in our front bedroom, each with a small iron balcony built by some previous occupant to hold a window box. Our scarlet geraniums flourish only at street level.)

The parents (wood pigeons, as you will have guessed) would land with a thud and mouthful of spiky building material on either one or other rail. Bits of feather were delivered too. But at last, as we firmly kept one window open and the other shut with curtains drawn to, they began to concentrate. And it was this liking for privacy, no doubt, that had brought them from the popular leafy tree we had to offer in our garden.

Soon after Mama P took up resi-

dence she produced an egg.

Day after day for over three weeks she sat on the nest, watching painters engaged on the house opposite (fortunately we had decided against having them this year), furniture removers next door, comings and goings of (for your holiday reading)

neighbours and all the other street happenings that entertain the sedentary at home.

And each evening Papa Pigeon would come along to do his stint for an hour or so round about 6 p.m. and let his wife take some exercise. Or perhaps she merely hated the rush hour traffic below.

An animal book, won as a young schoolboy's prize, said two eggs were customary, so for some days we went on expecting another. However, the pigeons had other ideas.

It was on the opening day of the Chelsea Flower Show, twenty two days after the sitting process began, that we first saw the chick. It was already far too large to have fitted into its eggshell, supposing we had been able to glue the scattered white fragments together; and however scraggy when born had now a decent covering of fluff.

A few days later both parents were missing. It was a cool grey day; and the little beaky face registered utter

miserv.

So my husband rang the Zoo.

These birds are difficult to rear by hand, he was told, but give it baby food. (This certainly seemed a more sensible idea than the small piece of apple he had previously poked out to it, receiving a vicious peck for his pains.)

Coming home from Tothill Street that evening, I found an empty tin of Nestle's full cream lying about.

Fortunately next day Mama Pigeon took over again. And about every four hours there was a tremendous balcony scene as, in a flurry of flapping wings, the small black beak dug deep into the yawning yellow one seeking predigested food.

On the Wednesday after Whitsun, a lovely June evening, we saw the toddler perched perilously on the balcony rail above the pavement. Then an hour later it was gone. (The Zooman had reassured us about its first solo flight if, as he said gloomily, it lived long enough to attempt one.) Early next morning when Mama P came along with breakfast as usual, the sudden anguish in her voice was heartrending.

Would they ever see each other

again?

She hung around for three days before moving off.

And then we cleared away the nest.

K.B.B.

INFORMATION PLEASE!

WVS feel justly proud of and delighted with the growth and development of the WVS Information Desks at International Conferences. This year those taking place in London will cover an unusually long period -from April to September-and there are ten Conferences in all as opposed to eight in 1959. At these Conferences there may be 20 or 2,000 delegates, and subjects range from The International Whaling Commission to the United Nations World Congress on the Prevention of Crime. The staffing of Information Desks is no mean task, and the teams of WVS members who give their time, wit and understanding to the job, booking theatre tickets, delivering messages, sending telegrams,

giving street and transport directions (in many cases to people to whom the English tongue does not come too easily) need infinite resources of patience and stamina. But they are gregarious and enjoy the many differing types with whom they come in contact, some of whom become friends-it is a friendly, stimulating job. A charming compliment came from one of the interpreters at the Conference for Safety of Life at Sea: having asked advice on suitable places to visit and having discovered that both she and the WVS member were mutually interested in old buildings, she left saying, 'I always come to the WVS desk because I can be sure of getting accurate information.' What better can we ask?



This Cross, made by a Lithuanian refugee patient at Gauting Sanatorium, was sent to WVS in grateful recognition of all the work which they are doing for refugees in Germany, and particularly for those at Gauting Sanatorium.

The Cross is made up of 740

pieces of wood and there is not one spot of glue or one nail in it.

REFUGE

WVS POOLE spent a hectic few days preparing a house and purchasing necessities for the arrival of our refugees. Furniture was moved, the house cleaned, oddments supplied by the Centre and other things purchased, beds made up and hot-water bottles put in, fires lighted (after getting the coal) and finally we were all ready to receive Mr and Mrs Livic and their little daughter.

They were absolutely delighted at their new home, quite amazed that they should be having three rooms plus a kitchen and bathroom, and kept exclaiming about it. The little girl was fascinated at being able to trot to and from the kitchen and wash up cups, etc. It would appear that they have never had more than one room, and three rooms 'plus' exceeded all they had imagined.

The same afternoon we were in touch with the manager of the Labour Exchange, and the local Roman Catholic priest, to tell them of the refugees' arrival in Poole, and the priest called at the Livic's home within an hour or so and proved most helpful in putting them in touch with local

folk who spoke Italian, and with the church and a school for Miriam.

Little Miriam arrived with a badly inflamed gum, and WVS took her to the dentist as soon as possible. We also supplied her with a dolls' house that we have been keeping for 'someone special'.

The Livics are settling in extremely well. Mr Livic started at a hotel as a waiter within a few days of arrival. WVS were able to supply some of the clothes that he neded for this. Miriam joined her school immediately and Mrs Livic has started work in a stillroom at an hotel today. They are keeping the house very clean and neat and Mrs Livic soon had a line of washing out. Mr Livic has bought himself some simple tools and has been able to carry out several odd jobs himself. He has also made a good start on the garden, which has been very neglected.

It has been a real pleasure to have been able to assist them. They really are most appreciative of all that has been done, and is being done, and we feel confident that they will build themselves a happy life in our community.

WVS in Cyprus and Libya

TWO years ago I had the good fortune to visit Cyprus where I was shown the work done by WVS members in the Rest Camp at Golden Sands. In those difficult days the men needed magazines to take with them when working in the mountains or when restricted to their camps and living under canvas. I made an appeal which was answered by Mrs Winson in British Columbia, who left Great Britain over fifty years ago. I have just returned from another visit to Cyprus and learnt that she still sends magazines, and her kindness is much appreciated.

This time a fellow WVS member from Cambridge and I met the present Administrator who took us to the permanent base at Dhekelia, and we were introduced to two WVS members who are attached to different regiments and we saw them at work. WVS members' duties are complementary to the work of NAAFI who provide refreshments and a shop-the WVS help the men to use their leisure profitably and happily. The great danger is boredom. The reading room is bright and attractive with gay curtains, a carpet and comfortable chairs, and up-to-date newspapers and periodicals are provided. Usually there is a radio set or a gramophone.

There are recreation rooms with a billiards table, table tennis and darts, and entertainments such as dances, tombolas, and whist drives are organised, and excursions arranged. WVS members are consulted on many private matters, and also act as liaison between soldiers and the authorities when there

are misunderstandings or genuine complaints.

Special qualities are required in the members, who work at least seven hours a day (morning and evening) six or seven days a week, mostly alone, and I was struck by the devotion shown by those I met to the well-being of the men of the particular regiment served, and by their gay cheerfulness and evident efficiency.

In Libya I was also fortunate to make the acquaintance of the WVS member attached to the R.A.F. camp at Idris, 30 miles from Tripoli. They have made an oasis in partly desert country, and the member has found some enthusiastic men to help in laying out a little garden, and a place for sitting out in the evenings of the hot summer. She is allowed to sell soft drinks, and she charges a fraction more than the tariff charge (to make it easier to give change). She hopes soon to be able to send a contribution to the World Refugee Year Fund from the men.

At the camps I found that comics, cartoons and paper-back books, such as Penguins, are needed. Besides being welcome in themselves, such gifts show appreciation of the Servicemen and the valuable work done by our WVS members overseas, who sometimes feel that people at home do not realise the kind of work they do or how hard they work at it. It was a privilege to make their acquaintance.

ALICE T. BOTTOMLEY

Cambridge WVS

MONMOUTHSHIRE COLLIERY DISASTER

As soon as they heard of the disaster, WVS were on the spot serving tea to the families gathered at the pithead. Later, when the staff of the pithead canteen went off duty, WVS took over and worked until midnight.



REPORTS FROM SCOTLAND

The party at Morecambe

An unsolicited testimonial

Gratitude, it has been said, is merely a lively sense of favours to come. The sincerity, however, of the following tribute by an independent observer to WVS personnel who accompanied a party of elderly people for a week's holiday to Morecambe is self-evident. Mr. Mallalieu of Huddersfield considered that the innovation of sending a WVS escort with the 40 members of the King George VI Memorial Club,

Dundee, was an example to the whole country. He praised their tact, sympathy, kindness and sense of humour and noticed how greatly the personalities of our two members influenced the whole party to ensure the holiday's success. During their stay in Lancashire the members of the Club were entertained to tea and a concert by the Heysham WVS Old People's Club and much enjoyed it.

Last May, Lady MacColl, Chairman, WVS, Scotland, officiated at the presentation to Duntocher Hospital, Clydebank, of a television set purchased from trolley shop profits. It has already proved an asset to the Hospital and a great pleasure to the patients.

Things that go bump in the night

Praiseworthy initiative was shown by WVS members of the double Border village of Kirk-Yetholm (twin of Town Yetholm) Roxburghshire, and once the headquarters of a tribe of gipsies, by the acquisition for group activities of a lower room in a condemned house. The decoration and equipment presented a challenge so members stripped, brushed down and initially papered the walls with brown paper. The C.D. Organiser encouraged this show of private enterprise by providing a gaily contemporaneous top paper and the whole effect is now charming and light. The door, windows, fireplace and even an old Victorian couch received a coat of paint. With matting on the floor and the addition of tables, chairs, cupboards and oil lamps a cosy picture of this room emerges.

The dénouement is unexpected. One rainy winter's night a lecture on 'rest' centres was in progress when a dull thud was heard from above. During the tense silence which followed, a bright red drop of liquid fell from the ceiling. Investigation was imperative and volunteers enlisted. A pool on the

old floor covering had found a weak spot and was seeping through. No blood was seen (only dye) and consequently no corpse either. The audience relaxed.

Say it with flowers

The Civil Defence Welfare teams from Spean Bridge and Torlundy, Inverness-shire (all WVS members) who won the first place in the Northern Area Competition were entertained to tea by the WVS County Organiser at Inverlochy Castle. Afterwards they were conducted on a tour of the castle and each guest received as a farewell gift a flowering cineraria grown in the castle greenhouse.

English 'as she is spoke'

This charming anecdote comes from a Renfrewshire member. What is a respectable girl? her small daughter asked her Mummy on receiving a birthday message: 'Be good and grow up a respectable girl' from their adopted Polish refugee. A natural question as apparently she thought it was something peculiarly Polish!

Happy Visiting

At a meeting held in Hastings for WVS visitors in the County Borough, visiting was fully discussed. The importance of establishing a happy relationship between the matron of an Old People's Home and the visitor was stressed as well as the task of breaking down the barrier of reserve and sometimes suspicion which is occasionally shown by old people to the visitor. WVS have to make it clearly understood that they have come with only one intention—to help in whatever way they can and with no idea of intruding on privacy.

Requests from friends and relatives for visits may often be followed up by sending Meals-on-Wheels or other ser-

vices provided by WVS. The request that is most difficult to fulfil is that of taking elderly people for walks, often badly disabled folk. This rarely means a short walk along the front or in one of the Public Gardens, but often a lengthy shopping expedition or a date with the hairdresser, when the visitor has been asked to wait while the old lady has a 'perm'. Less loneliness is found amongst the elderly living in their own homes than amongst those in Nursing Homes; although the former are often found in anything but hygienic surroundings they appear very content. One old lady we know keeps her coal in a bucket on the bed-she says she can reach it more easily!

HOME

A London Herb Garden

by Bon Viveur

Long before we even took possession of the decrepit Georgian house and a neglected three-quarters of an acre of grounds in Blackheath, Johnnie and I drew up detailed plans for the garden. We even bought a sun-dial dated 1730 and inscribed 'The Hour Passeth'. This is a masterpiece of English understatement because, any gardener knows, the hour vanishes when it comes to gardening!

Planning a herb garden is easy. You simply choose a site, buy graph paper, and draw a plan to scale. You make quite sure the intersecting paths are wide enough to permit the passage of a small light wheelbarrow through. Then you make a list with the aid of Mr. Thomas Culpeper and a demanding little note drawn from 'Eloge de la Cuisine Française' by the great chef Edouard Nignon. He ruled that 'cooks should make their own fines épices'. He defined this as 'the personal blending which above all others produces the most exquisite results'. Then a savage attack begins on the nurserymen of England. A leaflet raid of pamphlets pours through the letter box. Like Caius Marius among the ruins of Carthage, these are scoured frantically in a quest for suppliers of the necesary plants and seeds for herbs potagères. fines herbes and herbes à tortue (so called because they are inseparable from calves head and turtle soup). And still this is only the beginning.

We own the Cantley Hall receipt book of the Childers family. Everything must be grown, we determine, for their potpourri receipt. Enthusiasm mounts. We add maidenhair fern for Capillaire syrup, bistort for Cum-berland and Westmorland herb puddings (with nettles, of course!), French fennel for toute épice, arrach for preserve and marigold for conserve and salads. The word salads merely adds fuel to the fire. Down go white Chrysanthmums and nastrutiums-the petals of the former and the trumpets of the latter are tossed with borage flowers, geum petals and a few spikes of rosemary into the salad bowl. It also becomes essential to have acacia so that the flowers may be used for Escoffier's acacia fritters. You pause for breath. Someone mentions Belgium and you are off again with juniper for smoking hams the way we learned to smoke them in Ardennes, where the family of Marquet-Cornet follows the precise procedure of their ancestors when they sent their smoked hams by mule pack to the Caesars in Rome.

Still there is sorrel for making the most delicate of all soups (Germiny) and the clutch of herbs used for the range of real wine vinegars-chives, tarragon, dill, bay, shallot, garlic, fennel and chervil. But we also need a vine so that the leaves can be thrust into the terrace-sited barrel where the leese from our wine bottles turn to vinegar in the summer sunshine. We recall Elizabethan angelica tart and cranberry pie, mutter 'Wot, no lavender', send to Vilmorin in Paris for absinthe and start counting both the

herbs and the bill!

Beware of information from the experts: often plants deemed fragile are found to be hardy. A typical example of this is the sweet geranium, the leaf of which Constance Spry taught us years ago to lay on oiled papers at the base of cakes and sponges before pouring in the mixture. It imparts a delectable fragrance and peels off easily from the underside after baking.

We have currently succeeded with 83 different herbs. The French and English parsleys, the chives and the mint (sown in pots to control spread-





ing) have all been relegated to borders of the kitchen garden to make room for the herbs we are still acquiring. With a bit of luck we shall have over 120 by the end of this summer season and if anyone wants to do us a delightful disservice, please top that list

if you can, for you can rest assured we shall buy it. Of course if any one has a couple of spare winter coats they can part up with, they would come in very handy. Gardens it appears need more dressing than we and presently we shall be in rags.

HERBS POTAGERES

Orach; spinach; lettuce; sorrel; white beetroot; purslane and clary.

FINES HERBES

Chervil parsley; tarragon; fennel and chives.

HERBES A TORTUE Basil; marjoram; thyme and sage.

Congratulations to

Edith Frances, Mrs Hopes, who was awarded the O.B.E. in the Birthday Honours for political and public services in Bristol, and to Mrs Jean Wyatt and Mrs Janet Gibson of Hunstanton WVS who have been presented with a plaque by U.S.A.F. for their work in fostering Anglo-American relationships.

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Further particulars from:

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REPORTS

The mothers relax with a beetle drive

Birmingham Post & Mail

FROM

WVS has tackled the problem of lonely young mothers in the suburbs of Birmingham by founding a Mothers and Babies Club at Yardly Wood. The Club, which has only been open a few weeks, already has many members and many more children. The entire Welfare Centre is thrown open to them every Monday afternoon. The children play in the garden, the babies

EVERYWHERE

sleep in their prams, the young mothers relax together and make friends. Said one mother: 'I have lived here for 12 years and I've never really got to know anyone before.' The programme for the mothers includes talks, cookery demonstrations, film shows and games.

(The cover photograph shows the babies at play in the grounds)

He likes them tough!

A very sick old man in Frome begged our WVS visitor not to send him a Home Help. 'I've not had a woman in this house since my wife died in 1930' he said, 'I don't like them, so promise me you will not send a Home Help, but send me one of your Women's VIOLENT Services!'

Two members of the St James's (Hope) Darby & Joan Club present a trophy to the Headmaster of Winton County Secondary Modern School. The masters and boys have shown extraordinary kindness to members of the Club whom they invited to a performance of Gilbert & Sullivan's Ruddigore', showing them round the school in the interval and introducing them to the young performers. After much deliberation it was decided that the swimming trophy should presented to show that the senior citizens of Salford welcomed the union with the splendid youth and staff of this most energetic School.

Faithful

Nine years ago WVS in Heston & Isleworth rehoused a family from a barge and gave a lot of care to a little girl of 10 who was the family drudge. This same girl is now expecting her first baby and is going to the Centre for Welfare Foods; we think the Centre Organizer must feel like Godmother and Grandmother to her!

G. Baybut Salford

Anglo-American party

A tea party was given by East Suffolk WVS to 38 Officers' wives, and non-WVS Englishwomen who come to their monthly lunches and who offer much hospitality to the Americans, The Earl and Countess of Cranbrook kindly allowed WVS to use their home for the occasion, (Lady Cranbrook is Village Representative) and delighted the guests by showing them their Coronation robes which were draped on figures-a lovely wax figure had been produced by the Americans for Lady Cranbrook's robes but a male figure could not be found, and with difficulty a dreadful looking headless figure in two parts was dressed up and even made quite presentable. The guests were also shown some very rare and lovely old books.

Still remembered

Our WVS member in Gibraltar writes: 'I feel that the WVS who looked after the Gibraltarian children who were evacuated to England during the war would be gratified to know with what affection they are remembered by these same boys, now grown men. Often when shopping in uniform, the young man behind the counter will give me a warm greeting and tell me how good the WVS were to him.'

With love

A refugee adopted by Wood Green Centre wrote the following rewarding letter:

I do not know how to thank you for the parcel that I have just received. It is chosen with so much love and care that after many years I again have clothes that suit me as if I had chosen them myself. During the war years I was a maid on a German farm where I was sent because of my resistance to forced labour. My birthday was on the 11th April, but I think I have had it today!

(Wood Green had asked her for the date of her birthday.) Watching budgerigars given to Wormwood Scrubs by WVS

London News Agency

Greetings from Rhodesia

Eversleigh Darby & Joan Club, Hendon, spent a most interesting afternoon listening to tape-recordings. One of the old folk had been away on a visit to her daughter who runs a similar club in Udola, Northern Rhodesia. Greetings from this club to Mill Hill Club (where another daughter is a member) were recorded, as well as songs and a short talk by the Leader, ending with a request to Mill Hill to join in community singing with them, which they did. Now Mill Hill Club will make a tape recording to be sent to Udola.

Ship ha'pennies

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Robeson K.B.E, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., accepts on behalf or the Royal National Lifeboat Institution a gift of 5,760 ship ha'pennies (£12) collected by members of the WVS St. Saviour's Darby & Joan Club, Guernsey.

One-in-Five Talks in a hairdressing salon, Wilmslow

Wilmslow Express

She Gained Confidence

The National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen's Square, asked Stoke Newington Centre if they could assist in rehabilitating one of their patients by allowing her to come for two weeks to help with secretarial work to give her confidence. The hospital have said that after only one week they are delighted with her improvement and she, too, feels much more confident. The hospital told her she could apply for a post as soon as she liked, and we now hear that she is happily settled in one.

Disabled Dancers Improve

We are rather short of dancing partners for the disabled at Southgate, but were delighted to hear that the doctor at the hospital approved of the patients having pains after the dancing! He feels that the exercise is doing good. A Schools Inspector called to see us on Monday and was amazed at the improvement in the patients.

Children's paradise on Television

The WVS Children's Welfare Organizer for Thornaby has a lovely garden which is a delight to all children who call. There are all sorts of garden ornaments with pixies, toadstools, a waterfall and a wee bridge as well as a lovely rockery. The garden and visiting children have been shown on Television.

No end

Whilst trying to take their breath at Whitsun after the Refugee drive, Rotherham WVS were called out to help clothe families who had lost everything in fires; and immediately after that when they thought they had 'hit the jackpot' a request came to fit up a family of 17 children whose father was in prison; they coped!

Two WVS members from Kunsebeck and Bielefeld with REME and RASC boys whom they took to Amsterdam for a week end. The picture was taken when they dressed in local costume during a visit to one of the northern islands



Imaginative

A request for help for a mother returning from hospital to look after twins of six weeks and a boy of 21 was dealt with by Orpington WVS in a very unusual and imaginative way. They asked for volunteers from among the young wives from the Crafield Mothers and Babies Club, which is run to help young mothers in difficulties of various sorts, and immediately had offers which covered a number of specific jobs to be undertaken and ended with 'will do anything'. Not only was the mother helped on her return, but the young wives were encouraged to get round their own problems by helping someone whose problem was even greater.

It runs in the family

Our oldest member in London Region has just had her 84th birthday but still helps at the Darby & Joan Club and with the Trolley Shop and puts in one day at the Centre. We were very pleased to welcome two of her great grandchildren who brought in an afghan which had been made at their school by all the girls and given to them to bring to us as their great grandmother is still a working member of WVS.

Good Lavender Companions

Two years ago one of our members with connections in London and Norfolk visited the Good Companions Darby & Joan Club at Ingham, a little Norfolk village of 295 inhabitants. A friendship grew up between the two clubs and on a glorious morning in June, 1960, 39 Lavenders left London by coach to meet, at last, their country cousins for lunch and tea at Ingham Parish Hall. When, after a most lovely day, the guests departed, so did flowers and eggs, and even half a dozen pullets to take up residence in a Battersea back yard, and the Ingham Club are the proud possessors of a lovely tray bearing the signatures of the Lavender members-their Good Companions.

Avalanche

An appeal for wool for an energetic knitter for the World Refugee Year—an old lady of 83—was made in a Chipping Norton paper, since when she has as much wool as she will ever need, and not only wool, but postal orders, chocolate and a dressing-gown were sent. The money has been passed to the WVS mending party to buy materials for mending refugee clothing. This act of kindness by an old age pensioner, who is now knitting her fourth blanket, has brought her much pleasure in return.

New nails!

A tired mother of six children who went to Elmleigh for two weeks returned to find that members of Yiewsley/West Drayton WVS had made a jam and cream sponge and some lemon and jam tarts to welcome her; the next day they brought a bunch of tulips. The mother came to thank WVS and was full of praise for Elmleigh and the splendid treatment she had had. She was so delighted to find that her nails had grown again!

The life of a blanket

A prisoner of war in Hong Kong on his way home with his Chinese wife after being liberated, together with others in a similar plight, were each handed a parcel containing clothing, food, and a blanket when they reached Aden, and it was this blanket a member noticed in their cottage in Sussex. As it was in such good condition she assumed it was a new one made for the latest appeal for refugees, but they said it was their original one which had had many years of hard wear. Reading County Borough thought it might be interesting to the people who have sent knitted blankets abroad over the years to know that this particular blanket had done such good service and been so much appreciated.

Hard-working and Thrifty

A Hungarian man and wife who have settled down happily in Birmingham and are in regular employment have been able to obtain a house of their own on mortgage. Being very appreciative of the help of WVS, they asked three members who had been particularly concerned in helping them to visit them to see their home. It was good to see how by sheer hard work and thrift they had been able to decorate and furnish most attractively. With the help of a paying guest, they hope to pay off the mortgage within five years. WVS were glad to feel that by their assistance in the initial stages these refugees had been able to make a new life for themselves in this country.

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EXCHANGE and MART

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FINAL REMINDER

WVS TENNIS TOURNAMENT REGIONAL PAIRS Tuesday, September 20th. Pairs representing their Region must be nominated by their Administrator.

AMERICAN TOURNAMENT Wednesday, September 21st.

Play commences each day at 11 a.m. sharp. Three Cups and several prizes to be competed for. Elevenses, luncheon and tea will be available. Closing date for both events, September 12th. Entry forms from Miss K.M.A. Steele, WVS Met. Kent County Office, 1 Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent.

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