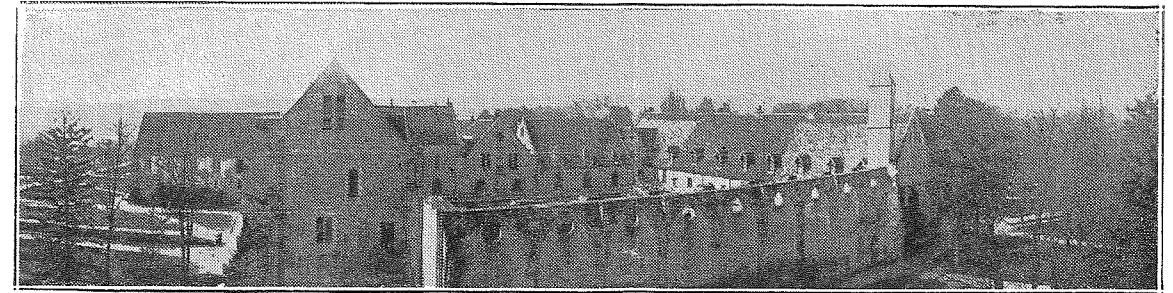


# ROYAUMONT NEWS-LETTER

FINAL NUMBER



JANUARY 1961

No. 24

**Object of the Association:** To maintain our war-time comradeship.

**Subscriptions:** In view of the proposal to wind up our Association, the Hon. Treasurer requests that no further subscriptions be sent to her.

**President:** Miss Ruth Nicholson, M.S.

**Vice-President:** Lady Sanderson.

**Chairman:** Mrs. Alison, 70 Queens Gate, London, S.W.7.

**Hon. Secretary:** Mrs. Wilson, Dalmonach, 13 Selwyn Road, Eastbourne.

**Hon. Treasurer:** Mrs. McIntosh, Flat 12, 73-4 Queens Gate, London, S.W.7.

**Hon. Editor:** Miss C. F. N. Mackay, 15 Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London, S.W.3.

## EDITORIAL

As many Royaumont members have already heard, the Committee, after careful deliberation, decided that the moment had come to wind up the Royaumont Association. This was suggested by Morgan at our Committee meeting in October, when she resigned from being Dinner Secretary, and later put to the meeting by our Chairman. Only two people voted against the motion, Mrs. Savill and Butler, neither of whom would be able to take on any work for the Association should it not be discontinued. There were eleven members present at the Luncheon and at the meeting and on another page you can read the minutes. Unfortunately we were at once the target for criticism, and it was, quite wrongly, inferred that the Committee had taken an undue responsibility in making this decision. It is a long time since we have managed to produce an Agenda before any of our meetings and it should be remembered that ill-health and family matters have lately made it very difficult for some of our office bearers to do anything about the Association's affairs.

Loyal Scottish Royaumont members have sent suggestions about carrying on which we print on another page. These suggestions are rather impractical. To begin with you cannot have a Committee working in Edinburgh with office bearers in London. It has been difficult enough to get members together on a certain date, when only a few miles separates them. Secondly, the 24 members who voted to continue are a small proportion of our entire membership.

We hope readers will agree with Salway's sug-

gestion, and make an effort to attend a farewell party to be held in London in October; and as you will see we are going to have a Committee meeting in April, by which time we hope we shall have the views of all our readers, and be able to resign formally, and generally put things on a business basis and arrange a date for a General Meeting.

To me, "Your Editor," to quote Collum's favourite phrase, it is with much regret that I write this for the last time, but quite frankly, every year I can give you less and less news of members, and often this is sad news. I must thank all readers for putting up with my deficiencies for so long, and many who greatly helped by their contributions of news and views, etc.

On reflection is it not wonderful that we have carried on the Royaumont Association (remember the opposition when Collum started it?) for so long, and is it not better to wind it up now when we can do so properly, rather than let it peter out, as it would inevitably do?

There are, of course, many things to be settled about the disposal of our funds and of the Emergency Fund, as regards the latter do please write should you know of anyone who could benefit by help. Middleton, after doing splendid work for many years is resigning, you can read her letter and suggestion on another page.

This last year has been a sad one for me, as one of the most popular Royaumont members, and my dearest friend, "Williams" (Lady Smyth) died at her home in Australia on 29th September. I went

out there in May to be with her for a little while. How many members can remember the year 1915 at Royaumont? In nostalgic mood we print a few extracts from an Orderly's letters home, in that year. It is much regretted that our President, Miss Nicholson, is not well enough to come to any of our meetings; writing earlier she said: "After so many years it does seem sad to give up the Association, but I really think we cannot expect the

members to continue in office with so little support. I myself cannot give an opinion as I have defaulted for so long, I shall not be able to attend again as I cannot move at all now without the help of two sticks or even stand." All our sympathy to our gallant President, who when she was able never spared herself on our behalf.

#### LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Upalong, Lustleigh,  
S. Devon.  
February, 1961.

My Dear Friends,

It seems rather late to begin by wishing you a Happy New Year but I have not been well and put off writing earlier. Now the important point seems to be whether the Union should continue or not. I have been asked for my opinion and find it difficult because I am quite sure I, personally, shall never be able to travel again to attend a gathering anywhere. I have not been away from here for three years now as I can't manage without two sticks or preferably crutches. It is my balance that is so bad. I understand that the Scots members would like to carry on and form a union of their own. It is much easier, of course, to keep together in Scotland as the distances are not so great. There were only eleven present last Re-union in London. No doubt after this News-Letter there will be opinions given. I think we shall have to wait and see what

the result is. I feel I have been a "broken reed" lately and I am much ashamed of myself. My youngest sister and her husband are in Uganda and Kenya just now having their yearly holiday from the Exeter practice by spending it with their son and daughter-in-law who are taking their holiday too. They have been up the Nile in boats as far as the Sudan boundary and not allowed to go any further—then to Kenya, staying with two of my cousins who each have a farm at Hoey's Bridge, and now they have taken their young son to near Mombasa for sea air and surf bathing. My sister Winifred is much pleased with the beauty of the scenery. It seems terrible that there is so much political disquiet. Sorrowfully I say goodbye as it may be the last time I shall write to you all.

Good luck to you.

Yours affectionately,

RUTH NICHOLSON.

#### FROM "LITTLE SIMPSON" (MRS. GRAY)

Royaumont, Spring 1960.

My daughter and I spent a delightful week in Paris just before Easter of this year.

Intending to re-visit Royaumont, I had earlier written to the Secretary of the Circle Culture, M. Crespelle, asking permission to see the Abbaye again. This was graciously given and he asked that we should inform him of our arrival.

On a lovely morning we boarded the bus in Paris and travelled out via Asnieres and Viarmes. These villages are quite unrecognisable now, busy centres with factories on the outskirts.

The trees were just in leaf, and on all sides were orchards white with fruit blossom.

Alighting at the main gate, we entered and passed the lily-pond to the front door. We were directed to the Secretary's office upstairs, once the doctors' sitting room. To M. Crespelle I explained my connection with Royaumont, and as he had only recently come and of the younger generation, he was very interested in all I could tell him.

He kindly escorted us round all the familiar parts of the old place, the wards, kitchen and cloisters. I confess we did not climb to the cubicles, where in winter we broke the ice for washing, before scurrying to the warmth of the kitchen below. Gone are the wood burning stoves. Royaumont is now

well heated. All the wards are in use as conference room, library, refectory and chapel, and furnished in keeping with its design. The kitchen is the chapel. Gone is the pinard-cellar, the sinks, the stoves and cocottes, which Michelet used to spin like curling stones, across the stone floor to the sinks. Woe betide feet or ankles in their path! There I pictured him in the dusk, when all was quiet, as we awaited the night staff, cross-legged on the window sill, playing his flute with the crickets for chorus, or again in the darkness slipping furtively in from the parc, with several pheasants tucked inside his coat—paur les docteurs pour les missis! What wonderful suppers we enjoyed. The cloisters with the tower in the background look the same, quiet and empty now. The little box hedge has grown no higher.

Here and there we strolled and finally to the bus at the gate.

M. Gouin occupies part of the Abbaye himself. The farm looks restored and prosperous.

M. Crespelle was curious regarding the work of the Scottish Women's Hospital there, and I took from my bag a recent copy of the News-Letter, which I gave him, promising to send him a copy of the next issue.

#### LETTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS RE WINDING UP OF THE ROYAUMONT ASSOCIATION AND MINUTES OF MEETING FROM EDINBURGH

Minutes of Meeting held at the Queen's Club, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 11th January, 1961.

Present: Miller, Macnaughton (Mrs. Crowther), Leng, Sister Rose-Morris, Sinclair, Sister Dunderdale (Lady Clow), Ramsay Smith.

Having heard that, at the luncheon meeting in London in October, it had been practically decided to wind up the Association, all the Scottish members now in Scotland were sent a circular or a letter asking for their opinions on the following points.

1. Do you agree that the Association should be wound up?
2. Should we transfer the Committee to Edinburgh, and carry on for a few years?
3. Should the News-Letter be carried on if at all possible?
4. Should there be a Tea Party in Edinburgh in the summer?

Out of 28 members notified, only two did not reply, two thought the Association might be wound up, and the other 24 definitely were in favour of carrying on with Headquarters in Edinburgh. The News, *certainly*, and a Tea Party or Luncheon in Edinburgh.

As there was no official notice of which office bearers were resigning, except Morgan and Middleton, the Meeting suggested that Smieton (Lady Sanderson) should remain as Vice-President, and Salway (Mrs. McIntosh) as Treasurer, and if any members resident in England could join the Edinburgh Committee, they would be welcome.

#### Emergency Fund.

Macnaughton thought it would be a pity to dispose of the Fund just yet, as it was by no means certain that at some future date some member might not fall on bad times and be glad of a little assistance. She therefore proposed that the money be put into something—perhaps a Building Society—where it would earn interest and could be withdrawn as and when required. The members concurred with this proposal.

#### News-Letter.

The members decided unanimously to send a very hearty vote of thanks to Mackay for the splendid work she had done over all the years on the News-Letter, and expressed the hope that she would find it possible to continue to act as Editor.

#### FROM SMIETON

The Lygon Arms,  
Broadway,  
Worcs.  
16th January, 1961.

#### ROYAUMONT ASSOCIATION

Dear Mackay,

For health reasons, I was unable to attend the Luncheon held in London last October. I was, therefore, greatly astonished to learn indirectly that at the Annual General Meeting held after that Luncheon, a proposal to wind up the Association was passed. There was no indication in the previous News-Letter or in the invitations to the Luncheon that this matter was to be discussed and no Agenda appears to have been circulated.

The Royaumont Association has been in existence since 1918 and I do not think that a decision to dissolve it should have been taken without full prior consultation with all members. I understand that only about eleven members were present at the meeting, and it has since become clear that a large number of members who were not present and who were unaware that the subject was to be discussed, are strongly opposed to the decision. At a meeting held in Edinburgh on 11th January for example, 24 out of 28 members consulted were against dissolution of the Association and in favour of transferring the Committee to Edinburgh.

If the former Committee no longer wished to accept responsibility for the affairs of the Association, they were perfectly entitled to resign, but I do

not think that their decision to wind up the Association, reached in such circumstances, can be regarded as in any way binding on other members who were not previously consulted in regard to it.

I suggest, therefore, that the proper course now is to insert a Notice in the next News-Letter inviting all members to inform you before April whether they are in favour of keeping the Association alive. If a substantial body of opinion favours this course, a new Committee should then be formed, preferably in Edinburgh, to whom the funds of the Association would be transferred in proper form.

Yours ever,

SMIETON.

#### FROM "CARTER"

Dear Mackay,

I write as one who, at our last Re-union voted for closing down the Association. The majority of us felt, though with regret, that the moment had come. May I comment on the resolutions passed by the seven Scottish members at their recent meeting in Edinburgh? I think it would be quite unworkable to have the executive members of the committee divided—some in Edinburgh, some in or near London. It has been essential to have easy contact—between Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Editor and Chairman—not only for the Annual Re-union, but for other committee meetings, and also for informal consultation.

The increasing cost of travel and the greater effort needed are obstacles which recently have prevented Scottish members from coming to the Re-union.

much to our regret here. Surely it is wishful thinking to expect any of the present executive members to reverse decisions and to keep on office in new and almost impossible circumstances.

Naturally it is sad to be winding up, but surely it is sensible to do so now, in spite of affection for the association. An Annual Re-union of only 11 members is surely a sign that the time has come.

Yours, etc.,

ANGELA HILLS (CARTER).

#### FROM MIDDLETON

90, Kensington Park Road,  
W.11.

November 24th, 1960.

Dear Mackay,

I am interested to hear that four years after the decision to keep the Royaumont Association in being, the few members who came to the Lunch this year decided to close down. What I gather is meant is that the Treasurer, Dinner Secretary, Secretary, Editor and Chairman resigned so that it will have to cease, unless others will take over.

It certainly would be far better to give it a decent funeral, than let it just peter out.

With regard to the Emergency Loan Fund, I am strongly of the opinion that this should also be closed down, and shall not myself be willing to continue as Hon. Secretary.

The last appeal to it was in 1955 and without the magazine there is little likelihood of need being ascertained.

The balance to date is £277 4s. 6d. and there will be interest of £6 odd for 1960 due in January, 1961, making roughly £284. There seems little point in leaving this amount just sitting in the Post Office performing no useful function, when it could be of real help to active work.

My own suggestion would be to give it to the Cheshire Homes foundation, which takes badly disabled people and helps them to lead a happier and more useful life.

Will wait till 1961 to hear what decision is made, and if it is decided to leave the amount in the post office account to know to whom the account should be transferred.

Yours sincerely,

RACHEL MIDDLETON.

#### FROM ROLT

"Carter" told me that the Association is to close down. Oh dear! I'd hoped we'd be able to carry on but I suppose it is inevitable as we all get older I was wondering if there was not going to be a Lunch Re-union this year as I'd had no notice about one, but Carter told me it had taken place. I'd certainly have sent a greetings telegram had I known about it. I shall miss the News-Letter as I always looked forward to it, and am so grateful to you (as we must all be) for having carried it on for so long. I know what a lot of time and hard work you must have put into it, and I do thank you.

#### FROM MORGAN

It was with great regret that I decided I must resign as Lunch Secretary to the Roy. Association.

Every year I have sent out about 100 notices and every year I have received about 30-35 replies. Numbers have been going down as was only to be expected, but I felt that as long as 20 people attended the lunch I would go on. Last year we only numbered 12 so I felt the end had come. It had to come before long, as we all knew. I would like to say that I for one have enjoyed our gatherings enormously and, too, have felt that the result was well worth the effort. I would like to take this opportunity of wishing all my old friends in the Association every happiness and shall keep very happy memories of our time together in France and of our annual meetings in London.

MORGAN.

#### FROM LENG

Sad about R. Association—but *how* I agree that we are all getting a bit long in the tooth!

You have been quite noble, and I shall miss the News-Letter badly.

#### FROM SALWAY

Dear Editor,

Is it not a pity to wind up the Royaumont Association without a Farewell Party?

Would it not be possible to have one last luncheon in October, and a good natter afterwards?

I understand our Luncheon Treasurer has already resigned so I and a few Royaumont friends would gladly arrange it.

Yours sincerely,

SALWAY.

#### FROM CHURCHILL

Bowden Hill,  
Pangbourne,  
Berks.

January 31st, 1961.

Dear Mackay,

I feel I must write to you, as this is my last chance, to say how very wise I think you all were last year to decide to wind up the News-Letter and the Association. We are all getting old and are finding it increasingly difficult to go to the luncheons, and it has all been such fun in the past, it could be a thousand pities, I think, to let it just peter out.

But before we do finish, I for one, and I know there are many others would like to thank you for your heroic task of running the News-Letter (with very little help from any of us!) and all the others, to mention names would be invidious, who have worked so hard to keep the Association going.

Yours ever,

CHURCHILL.

Lunch and General Meeting following the Lunch was held at the Service Women's Club, October 7th, 1960.

Mrs. Alison was in the chair

Apologies were received from many members. Telegrams from Dr. Henry Montreal and Miss Nicholson.

*Members present:* Dr. Savill, Dr. Martin, Carter, D. Parkinson, Butler, Y. Brock, Large, Salway, Morgan, Alison, Mackay, Howard, Smith.

A letter was read from Miss Nicholson, to say she was unable to travel to London due to inability to walk.

*Minutes* were not read or signed. It was suggested a letter was sent to Miss Nicholson.

*Lunch.* An excellent lunch was provided, coffee was taken in the reading room.

*Meeting.* After discussion Mrs. Alison put a resolution to the meeting "That the time had come to close the Association." This was put to the vote, which proved 9 for and 2 against. Dr. Savill and Butler voted against.

It was unanimously agreed to keep the Emergency Fund and to write to Middleton and Millar to that effect. Mackay suggested one more News-Letter to find the opinion of the members concerning the winding up of the Association.

Luncheon Secretary Morgan resigned, and Brock kindly offered her room should members wish to meet.

#### EXTRACTS FROM AN ORDERLY'S LETTERS HOME

The Year, 1915

(1) January, 1915.

"Such a lovely place, but Mon Dieu the cold, we three (the other two Berry and Macgregor) sleep in an enormous room with a window at one end, three beds, a table, two chairs and a wash stand the sole furniture. Last night we slept with all our worldly goods on top of us. There are about forty wounded or sick men, so far no serious cases. It really is the most fascinating place, beautiful cloisters with a fountain playing in the centre, strange unexpected winding staircases with slits of stained glass windows. At this moment I am writing in the Orderly's sitting room, more like a deserted chapel in spite of the chairs and the packing case for a table.

We are going to work in the kitchen, hours 6.45 a.m. to 9 p.m. off duty 2.30 to 5 p.m. They say it is killing work. We would have gone on night duty but Macgregor has still to be inoculated; poor Berry is awfully homesick and says she won't stay. Our mattresses are made of straw and smell of the stable. At the Garde du Nord on our way here we saw that they had put straw for the wounded soldiers on the shelves where the luggage is usually examined.

The cooks, Misses Swanston and Littlejohn, make their two orderlies, Allan and myself, work like slaves. Last night I waited upon the Doctors and staff, all indifferent to anything save food, except for one doctor, Mrs. Berry, who beckoned me to sit down, pointing to a chair by the door, and Miss Hamilton (the Secretary) who said "Merci mon ange," to the grubby blue clad scullery maid, when handed anything.

My Doctor friend's job at present seems to be in vast whitewashed attics where among myriads of sacks by the light of a candle end she sorts the blessés' clothes, she has such a sweet face and is so different from the others.

March 1915.

I am now on night duty. The ward I am in seems full to overflowing, the Sister and I have a busy time, thirty-eight beds to be made and p's washed, etc., besides that I have stoves to stoke and grates to

clean. Macgregor and I have one bed between us, she uses it at night, I during the day; we are so short of beds. The only other orderly on night duty is Fairlie; we meet in the kitchen to get our Sisters a meal. Some one got us some real coffee beans from Paris; we wrapped them in paper and crushed them with logs, and Fairlie made a brew in a pan over a spirit lamp. We only have miserable scraps, left us by the day staff, for our dinner.

December, 1915.

Yesterday (Christmas Day) was a great success, the blessés simply loved it. We had an enormous tree fixed into the floor at the top of the Refectory and most beautifully decorated by the men. After Col. de Misery had presented two Croix de Guerre to Ebraid and Legrand, the procession arrived—this was made up of two Minstrels (Macgregor and self), Père Noel (Mrs. Crawshay Williams) and a sledge pulled by Dmitri (the garage dog belonging to Williams, who is home on leave) and led by Collum followed by two Christmas gnomes (Mrs. Crawshay Williams's children). Father Christmas sat on a throne made out of packing cases and decorated with flags and mistletoe. Macgregor played the whistle and I accompanied on a drum! We were dressed in bright red tunics trimmed with cotton wool and had our heads powdered and wore red stockings. Père Noel and one or two others made short speeches in French, and after some presents had been given we all went round with the sledge, laden with sacks, and gave each man a present. A concert given by the Gouins followed, then a play by the blessés. The hall was packed, most of the blessés wore red jackets, nearly all the villagers from Viarmes and Asnières turned up and there were other distinguished visitors. Miss Hamilton arranged all the Christmas pageant, and wrote our French speeches for us.

Later, when the blessés had gone back to their wards, we the staff, had our Christmas dinner at one long table in the Refectory; real turkey, plum pudding and lemonade. The lights were put out as the flaming puddings were brought in. We had heaps of toasts and yelled ourselves hoarse.



usual cheery self. P.S.—Re ticket for Luncheon, I have just remembered my dear little Orderly of Salle Blanche de Castille," Johnnie, I did not know her other name. Miller tells me she is now a widow and also lost her daughter and I believe works for the Red Cross. . . . If possible I should like her to be invited as my guest."—I am afraid she cannot have been traced in time; presumably Miller knew her name?—Editor.

**Dr. Estcourt Oswald** asks me to say that she was the writer of "A Spinster of Long Standing," which appeared in the Royaumont News-Letter in 1958. She adds: "Oswald (Nancy) who married at the somewhat mature age of 55. My sight is not very good so writing is difficult."

**Howard Smith**, writing to Morgan, says: "We are being turned out of our house for building plans and in October had intended going to a furnished house at Budleigh Salterton, and taking a flat there after Christmas, but that is all off now, so we have to start looking again, what a life."

**Sinclair**, writing to Salway, says: "There was no notice of the luncheon sent to me this year. There was very little chance of me attending it but I like to know about it. I do hope it was a great success.

Miller was with me during the Edinburgh Festival. One day we were invited to lunch with Ramsay Smith and saw her new home and garden. As it rained the whole day we only saw the latter from the windows, but it was a blaze of colour. They have worked very hard at the garden and are rewarded by the results. The house is very comfortable and well arranged, so I hope she and her sister enjoy it for many years to come."

**Burrard** (Mrs. Dashwood) we were sorry to hear was prevented from attending the Luncheon by the serious illness of her husband.

**Rolt**, writing to Salway, says: "I'm sad at the Association closing down, but suppose it was inevitable, as we are all getting older and no one wants to take on extra jobs. Jon and Mackay and Angela (Carter) and Morgan have been wonderful keeping it going for so long. I heard from Daunt the other day, she has been writing lyrics which she hopes to get published."

**Oliver**, we hear, did not receive a notice about the meeting and luncheon, which was a pity as she lives in London. She approves, however, of our resolution at the meeting to wind up the Association.—(Editor).