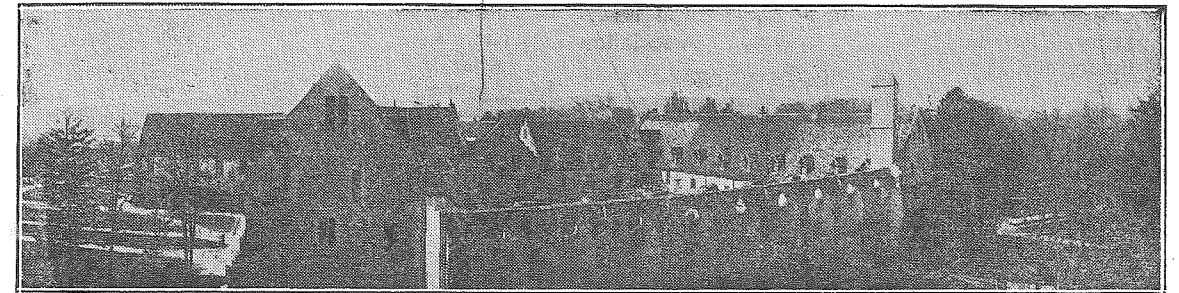


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ROYAUMONT & V.C. ASSOCIATION of THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S HOSPITALS NEWS LETTER



JANUARY, 1964

No. 3—Series 2

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

Subscription: Five shillings per annum, payable 1st January, for the year.

President: Lady Sanderson.

Chairman: Miss Ramsay-Smith, Whyteknowe, Peebles.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Leishman, Upper Loanside, Peebles.

Hon. Treasurer: Miss M. A. Stewart, Dunnydeer, Moniaive, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire.

Hon. Editor: Miss M. S. Miller, Meadowbank Cottage, New Galloway, Castle-Douglas.

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EDITORIAL

Greetings to everyone! May this New Year, 1964, give us all health and happiness.

The year just gone has, like others before it, brought sorrow into our ranks by the death of some of our friends. Specially do we regret the passing of Ruth Nicholson whose personality fitted in so well to the life of Royaumont. Her tall presence could bring us all up to rallying point, and her surgical skill filled each one of us, Sisters, orderlies and blessés alike, with admiration and confidence. On one of our pages will be found tributes to her memory. We are sorry that both our President and Chairman have been ill during the year. As we get older, strength is reluctant to return in many cases, and convalescence is slow, but we hope, when once the spring weather is established, they will improve and return to their normal vigour. We were very sorry to hear the sad news of the death of Leishman's brother when on holiday in Switzerland. He was a distinguished scholar and Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford.

We also send our deep sympathy to "little Simpson" whose husband died in February after a long illness.

Our 50th Anniversary.

1964 marks the 50th Anniversary of the opening of Royaumont to the French blessés. To celebrate this outstanding year of our war work, the Committee are planning to have a luncheon in Edinburgh during June. Notices of this will be sent shortly to all members of the Association and to those non-members whose addresses are known to us.

The Committee hope that a large number will arrange to be present. Could those who are planning a Scottish holiday in June include Edinburgh and the Reunion as part of their itinerary?

The New List of Members of the Association.

A new list of members of the Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets Association has been prepared, and each member will receive a copy along with the News Letter. We thank our President for so generously paying the cost of its production.

Royaumont Association Emergency Fund.

At the General Meeting that preceded the Tea-Party in August, 1963, it was proposed and carried unanimously that the giving of loans should be dis-

continued and replaced by gifts made at the discretion of the Trustees to members finding themselves in difficult circumstances. If, as a consequence, the balance in the Fund became insufficient to meet subsequent needs, an appeal to members should be made.

Steps are going to be taken to change the name of the Fund from "Royaumont Association Emergency Loan Fund" to "Royaumont Association Emergency Fund."

Our New Serial.

We were delighted to have Dr Henry at our Tea-Party in August. It was indeed good of her to make that long journey from Canada specially for it. She brought with her an old copy of "Blackwood's Magazine"—November, 1918—in which Collum had written a long description of life at Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets. The article is entitled "A Hospital in France" and starts at the inception of the hospital, describing our war work there until the departure of the writer in 1918. It has been suggested that we serialise the article, inserting in each Number of the News Letter incidents relating to the work of the hospital and to the hectic moments that descended on us in full fury from time to time. The first serial part deals with the early days at the "Abbaye." All praise to the pioneers for their magnificent work in the midst of unspeakable difficulties.

The Editor thanks all those who have so kindly contributed to News Letter, 1964. Short bits of information about themselves and others are much appreciated for the "From Far and Near" column. She hopes they (the members) will continue to give pleasure in this way.

Subscriptions.

The Hon. Treasurer thanks those members who have paid their subscriptions and would be glad if any who have not yet paid theirs, would do so.

Please let her know of any changes of address.

Letter from our President.

Hare and Hounds Hotel,
Westonbirt,
Near Tetbury, Glos.
March, 1964.

Dear Members,

I am glad to be able to report that the Royaumont and V.C. Association continues to flourish.

Our Annual General Meeting, details of which are to be found in the News Letter, was held in Edinburgh on August 30th last. As, unfortunately, Ramsay was ill, I had the honour and pleasure

of taking the Chair and as Leishman, our Hon. Secretary, was also absent on account of the death of her brother, Nicky very kindly consented to act in her place.

A sad event which was recorded was the death on July 18th, 1963, of our Ruth Nicholson, one of the outstanding figures in Royaumont history, a full account of whose great work appears elsewhere in the News Letter.

After the Meeting there was a most enjoyable tea organised by Moffet and followed by an exhibition of lantern slides brought by Dr Henry from Canada, which caused much interest and mirth.

The year 1964 will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Royaumont and V.C. Association. A Committee has been appointed to communicate with as many as possible of those who served at Royaumont for the purpose of inviting them to attend a Reunion which it is proposed to hold in Edinburgh sometime during 1964.

Finally, I want to thank all Members of the Committee for the good work which they have done in 1963 to keep the Association going. An especial word of thanks is due to Miller for the excellent News Letter and I hope that Members by providing her with as much information as possible, will enable her to continue her good work. I hope also that all Members will pay their subscriptions promptly to Stewart. By these means Members can help to keep the Association alive and strong.

Yours sincerely,

SMIETON.

Letter from our Chairman.

Whyteknowe,
Peebles,
Scotland.

Dear Members,

How the years fly! Once more Miller is nobly wrestling with the News Letter and making a very good job, with assistance in the way of news, from you all. Keep it up!

Smieton remembered that 1964 is the 50th Anniversary of the start of the S.W.H. hospital at Royaumont. Miss Ivens and the advance party arrived in Paris on 5th December, 1914, and went to Royaumont the next day. They took 10 straw mattresses with them as the equipment had not arrived; the only light was from candles stuck in bottles, but on the 13th January, 1915, the first patient arrived. If you really want to know about some of the early work of the Unit, get "A History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals," edited by Eva Shaw McLaren.

Now we want to celebrate that beginning by having a luncheon in Edinburgh in June. A small Committee of Moffet, Nicky, Jamieson, and Stewart are making the arrangements, and will be sending

out notices very soon. I have been trying to trace some of the 300 "lost-sight-of" staff, but it is difficult to find married names and addresses, so if any of you come across anyone who was at Royaumont or V.C. please let me know.

There may be many Members who cannot get to Edinburgh for the luncheon so I suggest we have a Tea-Party in London in September for them. We are all getting rather long in the tooth, but we can still TALK!

Here's tae us!

RAMSAY.

The Edinburgh Reunion and Tea-Party.

The Annual Re-union and Tea Party took place at the Royal Hotel, Edinburgh, on August 30th, 1963.

Present: D. Anderson, Dow, Dr Henry, Jamieson, Sister Lindsay, Macnaughton (Mrs Crowther), "Betty" Macpherson (Mrs Bruce), Manson (Mrs Falconer), Miller, Moffet, Sister Rose Morris, Nicholson, Sinclair, Smieton, Stewart.

Regrets: Anderson (Madame Petitpierre), Banks (Mrs Simmonds), Don, Howard-Smith, Jackson, Large (Mrs Wilson), Leng, Macfie, Merrylees, Evelyn Moore ("John"), Paley, Parkinson (now resigned), Rolt, Dr Savill, Simms, Simpson (Mrs Gray), Tait, Warren.

We were all delighted to see Dr Henry again. She looks very much the same although she is a grandmother many times over. She brought with her a large number of slides of Royaumont which were shown in an adjoining dining-room. Unfortunately, it was difficult, on a sunny afternoon in August, to get the light excluded sufficiently to produce a really black and white effect on the screen, but in spite of this, most of us recognised the familiar faces of both staff and blessés. Recognition, in some cases, caused much laughter, recalling, as they did, some amusing incident. Dr Henry received hearty thanks for re-introducing us, by means of those photographs, to the good old days of Royaumont. Then came the tea-party much enjoyed by all. There was plenty of time to meet and speak with everyone. This was followed by the Business Meeting.

We all join in thanking Moffie for making the arrangements. Besides providing an excellent tea, it was owing to her efforts that we were able to see the Royaumont slides.

The Annual Business Meeting.

The Meeting was held after the tea party and the following matters were dealt with:

In the absence, through illness, of Ramsay-Smith (Chairman), Smieton was asked to take the Chair. Nicky agreed to act as Secretary in place of Leishman who, as a consequence of the death of her brother, had had to go South.

Smieton referred to the loss to the Association caused by the death of their Hon. President, Ruth Nicholson, who had died in hospital at Exeter on 18th July after a long illness. Miss Nicholson, she said, had played an outstanding part in Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets affairs and would be greatly missed by everyone.

Arising out of the Minutes.

- (1) Proposal for retirement of Committee Members in rotation.
- (2) List of Members of the Royaumont and V.C. Association.

On consulting the Hon. Treasurer it was agreed that an order should be given for the printing of 70/80 copies of the names and addresses of Members. Miller was asked to arrange for one copy to be sent to each Member with the next News Letter.

Next Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman said that as 1964 would be the 50th anniversary of the opening of Royaumont by the S.W.H., members might wish to make it a special occasion, and she suggested having a luncheon party instead of a tea party. It was agreed that, subject to Ramsay's approval, the Meeting should take place in Edinburgh, if possible, in June, so as not to conflict with the Festival.

Emergency Loan Fund.

The following proposals by Moffet, seconded by Miller, were carried unanimously:

- (1) That the giving of loans should be discontinued and be replaced by gifts made at the discretion of the Trustees to Members finding themselves in difficult circumstances.
- (2) That if, as a consequence, the balance in the Fund became insufficient to meet subsequent needs, an appeal to Members should be made.
- (3) That steps should be taken to change the name of the Fund from "Royaumont Association Emergency Loan Fund" to "Royaumont Association Emergency Fund."

The Chairman thanked all present for coming to the Meeting, and Moffet in particular for making all the arrangements.

In Memoriam

RUTH NICHOLSON, F.R.C.O.G.

M.B., M.S.(Durham), B.Hy., D.P.H.(Newcastle);
Hon. Surgeon, Liverpool Maternity Hospital;
Hon. Gynaecological Surgeon, Liverpool Stanley
Hospital.

Born December 27th, 1884. Died July 18th, 1963.

Dr Duvall writes:

Miller has asked me to write a few words for insertion in the Royaumont News Letter.

My friendship with Ruth Nicholson dates from 1921 onwards when she was already engaged in Consulting Practice. Members of the Royaumont Association will know better than I do about her work at the "Abbaye."

She was physically and mentally well equipped for her chosen career—gifted with a good presence, the long deft fingers so necessary for surgery, conscientious to a fault and devoted to her work. Patient and sympathetic, she inspired confidence in all her patients, private and hospital. One of her junior colleagues, writing to me after her death, described her as "a pillar of integrity."

She was elected as the first woman President of the North of England Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society. A male member of this Society announced this to me and said: "I think we have picked a winner."

Alas, when the time came for retirement to Devon with a university friend and myself she developed arthritis of the hip joint which, in spite of expert orthopaedic advice and subsequent operation, caused increasing disablement, deprived her of the joy of a well earned retirement and, finally, necessitated hospital treatment.

She died in an Exeter Nursing Home where her sister, Dr Winifred Heal, had been able to visit her daily.

MURIEL DUVALL.

Our President sent a wreath on the part of the Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets Association.

New Galloway,
Castle-Douglas.

Miller writes:

Just a short tribute not only to the memory of a much loved "doctoresse" but to a friend who made my life in a civil hospital at home bearable, and helped me by her hospitality and kindness to stand up to an entirely different order of things from those I had expected to find. It was none too easy to adapt oneself to a nurse's training in 1919 after three wonderful years at the old "Abbaye," and I wonder sometimes if I would have had the courage to go through it all had I not had the support and kindness of the "Trio" as I called Ruth and her two friends, Muriel Duvall and Frances Tozer, sister of our Royaumont Margaret Tozer.

I shall never forget the many week-end excursions we had from Liverpool in the large Sunbeam Tourer. We went generally into the Welsh hills or to Delamere Forest, and there, the trio, shod and breeched for walking, covered miles of hill and dale in that lovely countryside. Walking was never my form of prowess, and so I stayed behind with the car, enjoying less active exercise, making up arrears of sleep and getting tea ready for the arrival in the late afternoon of the wind-swept travellers. These blissful days were followed by a cosy dinner at Huskisson Street in Frances's and Muriel's pleasant flat. On these occasions, after a long day away from the city, we all fell asleep in front of the fire, and it was only when I suddenly thought of the night porter at the hospital waiting to lock up as the clock chimed ten, that our party had to be broken up and realities faced. I remember, too, a wonderful camping holiday I was invited to spend with them among the Quantock Hills. While encamped there the Trio walked the whole length of the ridge extending from Taunton Vale to Watchett on the Atlantic.

Ruth was a great favourite with the nurses in the Liverpool hospital where I received my training. Her visits to the ward always gave pleasure, and her mornings in the theatre left no nervous wrecks behind. Those nurses with whom I kept up a correspondence for many years always enquired in their letters for "Miss Nicholson" long after they had left Liverpool and their training school.

Royaumontites will read Dr Duvall's tribute to the memory of her friend where she speaks of Ruth's academic career. My words are more concerned with the fun and pleasure derived from our meetings and outings. It is to Royaumont, however, that I look back and think of Ruth at her best among the French blessés, and it is as she was then that I see her before me now.

Nicky writes:

It may be of interest if I supplement the tribute paid by Muriel Duvall and Miller by adding a few paragraphs about the earlier part of Ruth's life.

Ruth was the eldest of a clerical family of seven and, as such, had at an early age to take some responsibility for the younger members of the family. This she did with kindness and vigour ("bossy" we sometimes thought her) and, later, when she became the first wage-earner of the family, with great generosity. She was a splendid elder sister.

Her determination to study medicine stemmed from the day when, as a small girl, she was taken by my father to a missionary exhibition in Newcastle. There she saw a medical missionary at work in a hospital ward and after that she had no doubt in her mind that she would become a doctor.

When the time came, she found herself the

only woman in her year at the medical school and one of only a handful in the school. It could not have been easy to study in a home in which so much was always going on, but she worked very hard and I cannot remember her failing in an exam. After taking her degree she worked for a time as a dispensary doctor in Newcastle and as Assistant to Dr Elsie Inglis at Bruntsfield Hospital, Edinburgh. She then went out to work in a mission hospital in Gaza, Palestine, where she hoped for experience in eye work. When work was slack she taught the pupils at the Mission School to play the piano and to dance—Royaumontites may remember the impromptu scarf dances with which she sometimes entertained us. She also visited Jerusalem and other places in the Holy Land.

Her time in Palestine was cut short by the outbreak of war and she hurried home to take a part in the war effort. At first, she had a bitter disappointment when, having been accepted for service overseas by a voluntary organisation, she was sent home from Victoria Station, because the head of the unit refused to have a woman doctor on his staff. Imagine the feelings of a strong feminist! This may have been all for the best, since she soon received an offer from the S.W.H. to join the first contingent going out to Royaumont.

As an instance of the awe and respect in which Ruth was held by the blessés I add the following: When I was a humble orderly in "Elsie," which you will remember was divided into two portions, it was the delight of one of the Sisters to order me to walk with a firm tread up the unoccupied part of the ward in order to see those patients, who were up, leap to the ends of their beds, while those in bed smoothed their sheets and awaited the arrival of "Madame La Commandante"!

Burrard (Mrs Dashwood) has had a long trying illness. She died at Eastbourne on October 17th, 1963. We send our sympathy to her husband and family. Large visited her frequently.

L'Abbaye De Royaumont becomes the Property of a Foundation for the Study of "Les Sciences de L'Homme."

In 1937 a "Cercle culturel" was founded at the Abbey of Royaumont, its aim being to promote among its members, drawn from all classes of society, meetings and discussions at which ideas and experiences could be exchanged.

This "Cercle culturel" is disappearing in a short time, giving place to a **Foundation Royaumont (Gouin-Lang) for the study of "les sciences de l'homme."** This news was announced last year at the close of a reception given on the occasion of the distribution of the diploma "Prestige de la France" to the members of the "Cercle culturel." This new endowment will receive the buildings and park of

the old Abbey created by St. Louis, all the equipment of the present "Cercle culturel" as well as an endowment fund to help with its initial expenses and activities. It is to ensure the perpetuity of the work created 25 years ago in founding the "Cercle culturel" of Royaumont that Monsieur and Madame Gouin have decided to endow this new project, the aim of which being to encourage all the initial efforts destined to formulate and solve the problems that lie before man by the ever increasing speed of Evolution.

Translated from "Le Figaro," 11.3.63.

A Hospital in France.

By Collum.

Reproduced by kind permission of "Blackwood's Magazine," in which the article first appeared, in November, 1918.

CHAPTER I.

It was an experiment of course. Everything the British did in those first months of war was experimental; much of it was improvisation. Our hospital was both. The story of its inception is almost as well known now as the tale of the genesis of the First Hundred Thousand, so I shall not say much about that.

The project had been simmering, I believe, in the mind of the founder from the first, and the great Women's organisation to which she belonged caught up the idea, and helped her to launch it; it was put before the public in concrete form during the last week in October, 1914.

Looking back on it now, the difficulties in the way of our leader were colossal. For three months women had been chafing against the official attitude of the Government, which refused, none too sympathetically, all their offers of national service. They were ready then to replace men on the land, in the public transport and communication services, in offices, in hospitals. They volunteered en masse for anything the country liked to tell them to do for it, and only asked to be trained. It is a matter of history how they were rebuffed.

The founder of our hospital, nothing daunted, carried her offer of women's assistance to the French military authorities, and by them it was accepted. That was historic, too, because from that action by the French Service de Santé much has developed, culminating now in the admission of women not only to British military hospitals, but to the British military transport and commissariat services, and to certain branches of the naval and flying services.

Of the half-dozen surgeons and physicians who went out in 1914 to found our hospital, there still remain at their posts the surgeon-in-chief, decorated

now by the French War Office with the cross of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and the Médaille des Epidémies in gold; and her second in command, who has been given the Médaille des Epidémies in silver-gilt. There is also one staff-nurse, a lady who went out then as an orderly, who remains of that pioneer band. The rest have scattered, many of them only working at the hospital for periods of a year or longer. And there are still a few promoted orderlies, whose service goes back to the first three months of 1915. Thus, as the hospital lies in what has always technically been the zone of the "front," a goodly number of the staff wear (by courtesy) four and five of the envied French service *brisques* on their left sleeve.

Although women-staffed hospitals had already worked with an army in the Balkan wars, and two women-staffed hospitals had been in France before ours, the hospital was essentially an experiment, because not only were its surgeons and physicians women, but it had enlisted women to do the rough work usually done by military orderlies. It was an improvisation, because it was billeted in an uninhabited Gothic abbaye, innocent of everything save walls, floors, doors, and windows; and there, in a country district that had been overrun by German soldiers twelve weeks before, it was told to produce, in the briefest possible time, an up-to-date base hospital that must pass the severest Paris tests.

In three weeks the thing was done, after a fashion. There was a hospital, with wards to hold a hundred wounded on the dry upper floors of the building, and there was a beautifully-fitted little operation theatre, with tiled floor, porcelain sinks, radiators, and white enamelled shelves; an X-ray installation, a dispensary, and unlimited hot water. Then followed an inspection by Paris authorities, determined to put this "women's show" to the most drastic of tests. Gothic architecture, which provided, somewhat marvellously, for a series of large rooms with sloping roofs, in between the vaulted stone roof of a lofty pillared Refectory hall and the steep outer roof of the building, gave the brass-hatted inspectors their chance. Blame the women for these rooms, and call the space-saving economies of Pierre de Montreuil "cow-sheds," and the thing was done. Brass-hatted inspectordom ordered the wards to be transferred to the ground floor. It might be damp, but at all events it had no sloping ceilings. So the "cow-sheds" (which, since the spring of 1915, named after our Founder, have had years of useful history as modern surgical wards, beloved by patients, staff, and inspectors alike) were dismantled, and the great oak-floored stone halls, with their slender pillars and vaulted ceilings, their oak panels and tall church windows, where the monks of old had lived and studied and worked, were scoured and heated once more, and installed with their rows of scarlet-covered beds,

their little white wooden bed-tables, their dressing trolleys, and screens. Inspectordom was again invited, and this time was unable to withhold its grudging permission to begin work. This was in 1915.

(Continued in next issue.)

From Far and Near.

Mrs Alison. Mrs Alison escaped all the bad weather last winter by going a lovely cruise to the West Indies. The weather was cold and wet to begin with, but it changed when they entered the warm seas of the Caribbean. After visiting Trinidad they flew over to Tobago which she considers the most beautiful island of the group—lovely calm seas, miles of sand, and woods bordering on the beaches in which one can take shelter from a too hot sun. She says hotels in this part of the world are only for the rich!

Cannon. Cannon has resigned from the Association, but the Editor had a letter from her giving her reasons. She has lost the "middle vision" of both eyes and cannot read nor recognise folk. "I am lucky," she says, "to be able to see my way about, but not exactly safe to cross the road. Yes, I knew Chapman very well, and she became one of my closest friends. Her sudden death was a great grief and loss to all who knew her. Also last year the death of Margery Young." (Thanks, Cannon, for your letter. It was good of you to write suffering, as you do, from a very trying eye condition.)

Daunt. Our Irish friend seems to live in a state of crisis—tempest and flood and domestic upheavals! "My faithful housekeeper and my man, James, had both to go away at the same time because of illness, so the dog and I were left to hold the fort for weeks. This seemed a proper time for people from all quarters to look me up. I have the firm idea that tourists passing through the village ask if there is anything old and odd in the neighbourhood, and the villagers can think of nothing older and odder than myself.

I was so glad that Peter was safe in France. So often I had thought of her in that Algerian Inferno. It must have been heart-breaking to leave her home and, I imagine, most of her possessions. It is difficult to start a new home and a new life when we are no longer young. The worst trials of old age are the aches and pains it brings with itself. My hands are fairly crippled, but still usable, if painful. My feet are worse, but if I can "barge" a shoe on, they still work—they have to—and it is amazing what one can do when there is no other way out.

Here is my latest catastrophe: Twenty-five huge cows broke into my garden, and what they didn't devour, they squashed flat. They were not even my cows. All my tulips went, and the plants I had

hoped would be blooming now were destroyed.

Dow. After an annual visit to Switzerland, Dow and her sister spent a week in Florence—their first visit. The weather was lovely and they were able to get about and enjoy its beauties, both in the galleries and churches as well as those in the town itself. A whole day's motoring over the Tuscan hills revealed the arrival of spring throughout the countryside—the silvery olive groves and the fruit trees laden with blossom—an unforgettable sight.

Large. Among other activities, Large is Chairman of the local Turnstiles Committee. We all hope she will be instrumental in getting rid of the nasty things.

If Large happens to be passing through Edinburgh in June we hope she will come to our 50th Anniversary celebrations which may take place during that month. She will be notified in plenty of time.

Minchin (Madame Steinmann). In the midst of all her ill-health and sufferings Minchin remembers with great vividness some of her amusing experiences at the "Abbaye." In a letter to the Editor she recounts one of these at an evening entertainment for the blessés—an Armistice party. It was in Blanche and Miss Nicholson came to it as a dancing dervish, black all over. She sent for me to ask if there was an easy way of getting it off. All I could say was: "Soap and water is no use. It must be grease." She was horrified. When Miss Courtauld was told that make-up was necessary for the plays, she refused point-blank. I told the others to "talk her round." Finally, she consented, and I went to her room to do the dire deed in private. I explained that make-up was necessary because, under powerful lights, if she had none on, she would look very ill indeed. So, with a mirror firmly grasped in her hand, I started. When I got to the rouge and the lip-stick my impatient protégée kept backing her head away shuddering at the very idea—but I got it on.

On another occasion she remembers how Howard-Smith "giggled when I handed her the mirror, and she saw how I'd made her up as "Widow Twankey". It's all like another world now."

Murray (Mrs Galbraith). The Editor is sure we all remember "little Murray," the chauffeur? What an amusing piece of fun she was! I think of her just now because, on receiving the News Review of the British Red Cross Society, I read that, at its centenary exhibition organised in Dumfriesshire, the Croix de Guerre awarded by the French to Miss Murray of Murraythwaite for rescue work under fire in the First World War was one of the exhibits.

Nicky. In a letter from Nicky, especially for this column, she writes: "I am still enjoying my first

year of retirement from a business life, although I feel just as occupied and hectic as ever I was. The Northumberland Branch of the British Red Cross Society with which I have worked for many years, soon pounced upon me and made me a Director of the Newcastle Division, i.e., general dogbody to the detachments, some rather fragile. Of course it is only an occasional job, but it involves me in evening trips to inspect uniforms and records. It also enabled me to attend the last of the Centenary Year celebrations, when the Government entertained representatives of the Red Cross at Lancaster House. The Queen Mother, the Princess Royal and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were present, and there were a good many Red Cross people from overseas. It was a very interesting evening.

"In May my sister, Grace, and I with two friends had a wonderful holiday in Italy. We travelled in a very comfortable American coach, visiting Milan, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Capri, back to Rome, then to Assisi, Rimini, Ravenna, Padua and Venice—a marvellous trip, but we became a bit confused mentally after seeing so much.

"When in London in November I spent a couple of nights with Oliver. We did a few things together and I heard her news and that of Peter whose daughter, Yolands, is now living with her Australian husband near London. I have recently had a long letter from Peter. She and Lucien have spent two winters with their youngest daughter, Andy, and her family at Chailly-en-Bière, near Fontainebleau, hating the cold after so many years in the sunshine of Algeria, but happy in the family circle. They are now planning a little home of their own in a small chalet in the garden of Andy's house and are awaiting the contractors who will convert it. They spend their summers in Alsace. Poor Peter, it is hard to have lost her home and her possessions. I do hope she will be comfortable, warm and happy in her little chalet."

Tollit. As I get older I find I am more inclined to think more of the past than of the present and also to dream of people I know who are long since dead. Turning to Royaumont, how wonderful it was! Christmas, with decorations galore, carols, and gifts to everyone, the turkeys and puddings in procession—all so gay and un-warlike. Then I think of the Canteen at Soissons with Inglis, Chapman and Rolt, and how we "scrounged" flowers and fruit from the gardens of ruined houses for our men, and how much they appreciated it all. Rolt will remember the nights spent in the cellar during the air raids several times a week.

I wonder if Figgis ever thinks of the nightmare journey we had from Paris to Cannes (I think it was) at the end of 1917 which took nearly 2 days owing to transport of troops. She and Armstrong and I

1964-

same here

were on 10 days' leave, but it was so bitterly cold with such wind and rain we were thankful to get back to hospital. It is happier to recall other days—Richmond singing, concerts in the wards, dancing, picnics and the lovely countryside. How it all crowds into one's mind!

Smeal. Smeal writes from a private room in the hospital at Chichester where she is having treatment for duodenal ulcer, a condition from which she has suffered for some considerable time now. In the meantime things are a bit grim, but she hopes, after a week or two, to feel better and able to say "business as usual." She writes: "I feel sad to be missing the "first fine careless rapture" of this lovely weather, but it is something to be able to gaze on lawns and trees from the window of one's sick-room."

She was so pleased to have Carter's nice messages and should like to take this opportunity (the News Letter) to thank her for them and to send in return her friendly greetings.

Howard-Smith. Howard is still walking along the cliffs at Hastings in spite of ominous warnings not to go alone, but she carries on regardless. Her only fears are ghostly ones (shades of Royaumont!) and so far there has been no visitation!

Salway. Salway has been enjoying the sun and warmth of Menton. She has a pleasant flat full of labour-saving gadgets and a good "bonne à tout faire" or is it "femme à la journée" nowadays? We hope to see her later on in Scotland for the 50th Anniversary celebrations when we promise her a great welcome. We shall revive the old Royaumont applause to greet her—"Un, deux, trois; un, deux, trois," ad infinitum.

Sister Whitworth (Mrs Cadman). We shall all be glad to get news of Sister Whitworth, the **major-domo** of the theatre. Up to the time of her husband's death her home was in North Staffordshire (her husband's home county). After his death four years ago Sister bought a small cottage near Malvern where one of her daughters lives and there she takes a lively interest in her grandchildren. (What a nice Grandmama she must be or is it Grandmum now?)

"Betty" (Mrs C. R. Bruce). We were all very glad to see Betty at the last Re-union in Edinburgh. She hasn't been able to be with us for a good number of years. We hope she will come this year and celebrate with us the 50th Anniversary.

Rolt. Rolt has had an operation for cataract, and now that her new spectacles have arrived she finds life worth living again. She is able now to read with ease, and to see distant objects closely. Writing is a little more difficult. She is hoping to be able soon to take a test to drive her car. She writes: "I am back again in my own house and have an old friend and her husband living with me which is very nice. The friend is an excellent

cook and her husband a very "handy man" and we have all settled in very happily including their Jack Russel terrier and my black poodle. (The Editor queries the name of the terrier!) I should so enjoy seeing some of the old crowd on their way north or south. We are only 7 miles from Penrith. Anyone on their way north over the Kirkstone Pass would be quite near. From the Ullswater Road turn sharp left at the Brackenrigg Hotel. So do "drop in" for a chat and coffee or lunch or tea." (Thanks from us all.)

Rolt wonders if any of us know what became of "Geraldine's" son? The Editor heard a long time ago that his maternal grandmother had taken him away to Australia.

Peter (Madame Campora). See Nicky's bulletin. The Editor was very sorry to miss Peter and Lucien when, in May, they were in Edinburgh visiting their daughter, Elizabeth, married to a naval chaplain stationed at South Queensferry. Now that Elizabeth and her husband have left Edinburgh I am afraid there is little chance of seeing Peter and Lucien in the near future. Thank you both for your letters. Sister Rose Morris was thrilled at meeting, after so many years, her once tireless orderly (Ed.).

Jackson lives near Glasgow and hopes to be at the 50th Anniversary celebrations. She writes: "No excitements here at all! My main interest is gardening and the theatre in winter. I have a French friend who comes in to see me and we have what she is pleased to call a "French afternoon." This means, in reality, a very exuberant monologue on her part which we both thoroughly enjoy!

Thorpe (Mrs Victor Smith). We are very pleased to hear that Thorpe has joined the Association. The Editor remembers her and her sister very well at Royaumont. Living at Moffat, not very far from Edinburgh, she will be able to attend our Re-unions especially the one this year to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our arrival at Royaumont. Thorpe has a son happily married in Nigeria and a grandson at school in England. Some time ago she flew over to Nigeria and stayed there three months. She loved every minute of her visit. Thorpe's sister lives in Bude. (The Editor hopes that "the old car" she speaks of will bring her over to New Galloway one of these days—46 miles across country, and what lovely country too!)

Armstrong. In a letter to Rolt, Armstrong seems to be in good form and is doing a little writing. We must all remember the stirring dramas she produced at Royaumont and V.C. and the enthusiasm of the blessés!

Reminiscences.

Merrylees has sent us some reminiscences. Can others not follow her good example?

One story comes from "Big Murray" while in "Elsie." One day she found a newly arrived Sister

very puzzled by a blessé who seemed very upset when he returned from the theatre. She said to Murray: "I am sure I said nothing to upset him." But the patient in the next bed told the whole story: "Mon camarade a demandé à la Sistaire 'Est-ce que je vais mourir?' 'Oh oui, oui,' she replied briskly using her complete vocabulary to reassure him!

Merrylees continues: "I think often of our three best friends at Royaumont.

"(1) Monsieur le curé at Asnières who went without a fire for two winters in order to have money to buy cigars for the blessés. I remember he had a little dish on his desk full of Royaumont snapshots.

"(2) Monsieur Delacoste who supplied so many of our needs—the incinerator, the baraque when the kitchen staff needed somewhere to feed us, and many other necessities. When I returned to Royaumont after the war, I went to a garden near the cemetery to buy flowers for our dead. I chose all the best I could see and then asked the jardinier how much I owed him. The man replied: 'Rien, Madame. Ce jardin est celui de M. Delacoste.'

After the war, Barclay and her sister Iseult went to 'Le Cheval blanc' at Viarmes which M. Delacoste had chosen for the Royaumontites to stay at when they visited France. All the wine and vegetables were sent in for us from his garden.

"(3) 'Le Spécialiste' who, after his return to his regiment and during a week's leave, said he would spend it with his 'famille' at Royaumont. He worked hard all the time, chiefly opening wine casks. Later, dear Miss Nicholson arranged for us to get him over to one of our dinners. He sat on Miss Ivens' right and, when called on for a speech, made an excellent one which I think only a Frenchman could have made impromptu. Salway and her husband were so marvellously kind. They took a room for him at the Regent Palace and accompanied him there themselves. Inglis, Berry and I took him to see the sights of London and Salway and I saw him off at Victoria—and received the accolade."

Now, Miller, I have done my best. I hope I have successfully filled a corner of the News Letter. (Indeed you have! Thank you.)

The Royaumont "Cafard" Ditty.

Do Nicky, "little Johnny," and, I think, Peter remember singing, when life in the "salle de bains" was hectic, an improvised tune to the words of this pathetic little poem?

I wish I were a little rock
A-sittin' on a hill.
And doin' nothin' all day long
But just a-sittin' still.

I wouldn't eat, I wouldn't drink,
I wouldn't even wash;
But sit and sit a thousand years
An' rest myself, by Gosh!

We thought at that time that we were dead-beat and overworked. Little did we think how much more weary we were all going to be in the Second World War.

Life in Spain—1964.

Peter (Phyllis Williams) writes to Miller:

This, my New Year letter to you, is rather late, but I have put off writing until I had been in Spain long enough to form a fairly rational opinion of conditions here. No doubt you have seen the various advertisements (and letters) in the Sunday papers which, on the whole, give an inflated idea of the pleasures of a holiday out here. It appears that a large number of London Travel Agencies are trying to cash in while they can to persuade people to "Renta Villa," etc., in Spain. So, in view of this I will try to give you a few details of my own experience in answer to your various questions and comments.

The climate on this strip of the Costa Blanca—roughly between Valencia and Alicante—is the mildest in Spain without any question. So much so, that the big orange growers, who have had orchards on the Costa Brava, have sent down all their young trees to be cared for round about here where frost and snow are unknown. The three winter months, December, January and February, often give us cold nights down to 44 degrees Fahrenheit, but the day temperature average is round about 60 degrees, so that, on our verandah, the geraniums have been in flower ever since we arrived in October. Carnations, roses and honeysuckle are also in flower all the time. I imagine this must be partly due to the fact that on the shortest day the sun rises at 8.15 a.m. and sets at 6 p.m., so that the extra daylight must make an enormous difference to plant life.

Now, as regards costs. It is true that Spain has been and still is an exceedingly cheap country to live in, but prices are going up as the tourist trade increases and particularly our dear friends, the Herrnfolk, are prepared to pay anything to get what they want. Benidorm, which has an exquisite natural setting and a beautiful sandy beach, has been ruined by "developments" run by Germans,

and the same can be said of any number of similar places. Fortunately, Altea, which has a pebbly beach, has been left alone. I pay 3/6 to have my hair shampooed and set. Brandy, gin and rum cost about 7/- a litre. Oranges and bananas are 3d a kilo and garden spinach about 5d. If one is prepared to drink unbranded sherries from the various bodegas which, here, are not as good as those on the Costa Brava, one can get a litre for about 8d, and the Vino Commun, much better than "pinard," is less than 8d a litre.

Anything manufactured is as expensive, or more so, than at home, but home-produced stuff, apart from butter and meat, is often less than a quarter of the price, particularly if one shops in the Markets, as we do, and doesn't demand out-of-season fruits. Fish, of course, costs almost nothing—a kilo of fresh sardines for our lunch cost us 6d. Before I forget, one can get an All-In Health Insurance which covers dentistry for about 4/- a month. My sister, Barbara, and I have rented a rather bare and stark Spanish flat for this winter, but we decided almost on our arrival to go shares in getting a villa built at Alhama Springs, behind and above Altea, at the foot of the Sierras, because Barbara wants to spend 9 or 10 months out here each year, and I shall spend 6 or 7 according to how things go at home. The villa goes ahead apace—in fact, it may be ready for us to move into before I

leave in April which will be a great thrill. We have three bedrooms (six beds), 2 bathrooms (one with a shower only), a very large sitting-room with wood-burning fireplace, a covered terrace along two sides of the villa and, underneath, a store room, wash-house and accommodation for our car. We were most fortunate to get in with our contract before Christmas, as since then prices and wages have gone up. We hope that all our friends will come out and visit us as there will be always plenty of room and a warm welcome. This particular estate is being developed by a Canadian geo-physicist who made it his business to find water before he bought the land! In this way a heavenly little valley, which was discovered by the Moors and where they planted almonds, olives, and oranges, not to mention the aguroba bean tree, has now been developed as a private estate, and we are among the fortunate folk to have a house there. There are people—all English-speaking—of various nationalities up there, Norwegians, Dutch, a Finnish girl, and English and Canadians. Altea, itself, is full of ex-patriates from the various ex-colonies, from the Congo, Indonesia, Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia, Hong Kong, etc., nearly all English-speaking. We have already made a number of pleasant friends and acquaintances.

My health is much improved and, as long as I don't go out in a high wind, I feel fine.

STATEMENT OF ROYAUMONT AND V.C. ASSOCIATION ACCOUNT FOR 1963.

RECEIPTS			PAYMENTS		
Carried forward on 1st January ...	£61	0 10	Cheque drawn for £1 6/- to pay News		
Donation for News Letter from Smeiton	1	5 0	Letter expenses—		
Donation for News Letter from Arthur	0	15 0	Miller ...	£0	10 0
Donation for News Letter from Leng	0	15 0	Stewart for Stamps ...	0	16 0
Subscriptions	14	8 0	George Outram—Printing	15	0 0
			Wreath for Miss Nicholson	5	5 0
	£78	3 10		£21	11 0

Balance in hand ... £56 12 10

(Sgd.) MARGARET A. STEWART.

ROYAUMONT ASSOCIATION EMERGENCY FUND.

Balance in hand, December, 1963 ... £256 5 0

(Sgd.) A. M. NICHOLSON.