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interesting news

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



January, 1967

No. 6—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, Whyteknope, Peebles.

**Hon. Secretary:** Miss Leishman, Upper Loonside, Peebles.

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

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

## EDITORIAL

We are a small community these days, but let us hope that 1967 will bring happiness and health to our survivors. I was listening in one evening to an octogenarian who, in spite of troubles of all kinds, had weathered the storms to his own satisfaction and was looking on what remained of his life with more or less calm resignation. I suppose that even the youngest of us should be doing the same and, given good health, a clear brain and a comfortable income — not always attainable — should be finding the world still an interesting place to live in. We can at least make a bold "try." The passage of time is relentless and we must make the most of what remains.

So now with those rather sententious remarks for the opening of a New Year let us turn to the last one and see what has been happening. It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of our President's husband and sister, a double bereavement, within a few months of one another.

It must indeed have been a shattering blow. Every member of the Association sends her deepest sympathy. 1966 has taken toll of some of our members of whom we have written in the "In Memoriam" page. Having seen Rolt at the Reunion luncheon in June, shortly before her death, it came as a great shock to us all. She was so bright and happy that afternoon, so glad to be with us all again that it is hard to believe she has gone.

The Reunion in June, 1966, took the form of a luncheon instead of a Tea Party. The change was suggested by some members who live out of Edinburgh and found that, after an afternoon Reunion, they could not get home on the same day. This was made all right by having the luncheon. The Report can be read further on in the News Letter as well as that of the Annual General Meeting that followed it. Two days after the Reunion, most of us managed to stay on for a very pleasant afternoon with Ramsay and her sister in Peebles. After our sumptuous tea we had

a walk round the large garden where there was much to admire. Some of us had missed the bus back to Edinburgh so we went along to see Leishman's cosy little flat, also in Peebles, where we kept the fun going until time to leave. When Ramsay got us all together she suggested having a Reunion in London in the autumn for those members living in the South and for various reasons unable to make the long journey north. Moffet, being a member of the London Overseas Club, organised the Reunion. The attendance was small but everyone seemed to enjoy it very much. The letters of regret were very numerous. Moffet has written a Report on the meeting. Because it was so much enjoyed, Ramsay suggested that there should be a Tea Party in London in October, 1967, say, between the 1st and 14th October. Will members please let Moffet know if they approve? Her address is 9 Castle Street, Brechin, Angus, Scotland. The earlier we fix something, the more time it will give the members to arrange their dates if they want to be present. It will give the Organiser on this side of the Border some idea of her numbers.

The Editor thanks all those who sent her news of themselves and others. Everyone is so good answering the post cards I send out, before, starting on the News Letter. I call them "prodding" post cards! From "far away" we have seven members who keep in close contact with us. In Australia there are Armstrong, Figgis and Rutherford (up to the time of her husband's death). In Rhodesia we have Barclay; in Canada, Dr Henry; and in France, Peter Campora and "little Andy." This year I have at last got hold of Simms chiefly on account of the persistence of Smeal who is a most loyal friend of the News Letter. We welcome a letter from "John" (Evelyn Moore) who has not long recovered from pneumonia and very sad at having to give up her part in "The Mousetrap."

Can anyone put me in touch with Summerhayes? Quite a lot of members ask for her and wonder what she is doing and where she is.

Stewart, our Hon. Treasurer, will be much obliged if the members would send their subscriptions direct to her address on the cover of the News Letter instead of sending subscriptions to friends who ultimately have to send them on to her.

The work of the Treasurer is considerable by the time arrears are counted out and the "reminders" sent off, over and above the making out of the actual final figures. Merci d'avance.

### Letter from our President

The Hare and Hounds Hotel,  
Westonbirt,  
Tetbury,  
Gloucs.  
3rd March, 1967

Dear Members,

I hope this year that I can come to the Royaumont Reunion in Edinburgh. Last year I missed both the Reunion in Edinburgh and the Tea Party in London, owing to sad circumstances.

My husband died last summer and a month or two later my sister also died in Scotland, and I was kept very busy looking after their affairs. I heard that the 1966 Reunion in Edinburgh and the Tea Party in London were most successful. It is a great pleasure to know that the Royaumont Association still continues to flourish in spite of our advancing years. I spent a very happy Christmas with Ramsay in Peebles. One day we lunched in Edinburgh with Ramsay and her sister, and Miller and Sister Rose Morris were also invited. It was a very happy party and as you can imagine we talked mostly of old times at Royaumont. It was all most enjoyable. As usual, we look forward to our News Letter so ably edited by Miller. I am very glad to know that members have sent in many items of interest which is most encouraging to the Editor.

It is nice to feel that this News Letter of ours continues to keep in contact with our surviving members who live so far apart in various parts of the world.

With good wishes to you all,

Yours ever,

SMIETON.

### Letter from our Chairman

March, 1967

Dear Members,

I hope this will be in time for the News Letter as I was not able to write earlier.

First, I must wish you all a very good 1967 with better weather than in 1966.

I wish more of us could meet and exchange news as we did at the lunch in Edinburgh, which was a most cheerful affair. The Tea Party in London was also most enjoyable, though we were few in number. Would Members like to make it an annual affair in the middle of October so that plans could be arranged to fit it in? If so, would they let me or Moffet know what they think about it.

We were very shocked by Rolt's unexpected death as she was at the lunch in Edinburgh in great form. She was a wonderful person and a fine

example of courage in the face of suffering and danger.

I am writing from Palma, Majorca, an interesting old town, as many of you know, but being terribly built up with tall flats and modern hotels. The country is very flat with miles of olive and almond orchards and then suddenly high rocky mountains and sheer cliffs to the sea.

With renewed good wishes to you all,

Yours ever,

RAMSAY.

### The Edinburgh Luncheon and Annual General Meeting

In June, 1966, a luncheon was held in The Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh. After a very good repast which we all enjoyed, providing us, as it did, with an excellent stimulus for conversation on past and present, we all felt it was good to meet again and the journey well worth while.

Those present were: Leishman; MacNaughton; Manson; Miller; Moffet; Morris; Nicholson; Rolt; Simpson; Sinclair; Ramsay-Smith; Stewart; Torrance; Warren.

The Annual General Meeting followed the luncheon. Ramsay suggested that one of the members should be appointed as her Deputy and she proposed Moffet. MacNaughton seconded her and this was carried. The Minutes were read and passed.

### The London Tea Party

On Friday, 7th October, 1966, the Royaumont and Villers Cotterets Association held a Tea Party in Overseas House, St James Street, London. It was specially organised for members in the South who find Scotland a long way off!

We were a small gathering, numbering only ten, but it was a very cheerful and happy one.

The Ulster Room at Overseas House is a delightful place for such a gathering. The windows look out to the pretty garden and the trees beyond. The Management had supplied lovely flowers inside. Two guests were present, invited by Nicky. These were Forrest (Poppet) and "little Johnnie," Mrs Cavenish.

Members present: Ramsay-Smith, Middleton, Moore ("John"), Nicky, Smeal, Howard Smith, Whitehorn and myself. Big Andy and Lady Blood were to have been present as Middleton's guests but, at the last moment, illness prevented them from coming, much to our disappointment.

There was the usual chatter, as always when Royaumontites meet, and I think we all had an opportunity on this occasion of having a good chat

with everyone, and finding out what each is doing nowadays. All who sent regrets seemed to be genuinely sorry not to be able to be present. Some had recently been in London and others were to be there later so it seemed our date fell between two stones. No one nowadays can pop up and down often with travelling so expensive. Dr Henry (Canada), Barclay (Rhodesia) and "little Andy" (Madame Petitpierre) were the members from abroad who sent regrets.

It was decided that we try to continue having a yearly London Reunion to be held early in October. This decision will be mentioned in the News Letter. This will give members time to think about it and make their plans accordingly.

Regrets were sent from: M. Anderson (Mrs Petitpierre), Banks (Mrs Simmonds), Barclay (Mrs Golding), Day, Don, Dow, Dr Henry (Mrs Stewart Henry), Large (Mrs Wilson), Leishman, MacNaughton (Mrs Crowther), Miller, Rolt, Rose-Morris, Simpson (Mrs Gray), Sinclair, Smeton (Lady Sanderson), Stewart.

F. C. MOFFET.

## In Memoriam

With great regret and with deep sympathy to their relatives and friends, we record the death of several of our members.

**Sister Lindsay.** Died on April 22nd, 1966. Many of us, on hearing of her death, will recall the happy days with her in Marguerite. She was a great favourite of the orderlies and they liked working under her. She had patience and understanding when dealing with young, inexperienced women such as we were to begin with. We remember her with affection. In a letter that the Editor had from her sister, she said she had been confined to bed for some considerable time. "In the end we had to get other advice. She was taken to hospital but she went steadily downhill and died on April 22nd. She often spoke of you all and I remember you coming to see her when she was at home."

**Carmichael.** At Edinburgh, on 19th September, 1966, Miss Lucie H. Carmichael, daughter of the late James Carmichael of Arthursstone. We remember her coming to only one Reunion, but MacNaughton and Torrance have both seen her within recent years.

**Paley** died in September, 1966. She had many friends at Royaumont, among whom was Warner, who predeceased her on August 31st, 1965. Miss Helen Robson and Paley had lived together for 56 years, and it is to Miss Robson

that the Editor owes this touching tribute to her memory:

"Although she had not been well for some time, she had been leading a more or less normal life, and was working in her garden two days before she died. Her great interests were her farm (she had a well known herd of pedigree Jerseys and had won many Championships and prizes at Shows) and her garden which she loved.

She did a great deal for the village here, helping both Church and Church School. She was on the Parochial Church Council and a school manager (foundation member). She was Chairman of the North Lancs. R.S.P.C.A., for which she worked very hard as she was so fond of animals. She was President of the Vale of Lune Young Farmers' Club and President of the Colne and District Horticultural Society. You will realise that her life was a very full one. She was a really wonderful person and was loved and respected by everyone who knew her. She will be greatly missed.

**Rolt.** It is with great sadness in our hearts that we have to record the death of Rolt on September 28th, 1966. We were so pleased to have had her with us at the Royaumont luncheon in June of last year in Edinburgh. She seemed little changed—she was the same happy and affectionate person, full of fun and the joie de vivre. Then came the sad news of her death. In a letter to Moffet, Mrs Wood, wife of the Rector at Watermillock, gave us the sad details. She died peacefully in the ambulance while being transported to the Cumberland Infirmary at Carlisle. For a few weeks she had been staying at the Rectory, devotedly taken care of by Mrs Wood. She was most happy there. She had visits from all her friends and one day she actually got the length of Croft, her own home. But things changed. She became weaker, and it was considered advisable to send her back to hospital. She died on the way. According to her own wishes the funeral took the form of a cremation, and the ashes were later on interred at Watermillock. There was a Memorial Service in the church the following week.

**Armstrong.** (The Editor had a letter from Armstrong (Australia), in which she expressed her great grief over Rolt's death.)

"There were not many blows that Rolt was spared. It fills me with wonder that she always felt herself in God's care. She was so gallant and gay and charming. Do you remember her lovely golden hair? She made me laugh once by telling me her family said that in all moments of crises Agnes' hair fell down! Well, that was in a younger and kinder world."

## A Hospital in France

By Collum

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

### CHAPTER IV.

#### Villers-Cotterets, 1917

It was during the summer of 1917 that we branched into a second hospital. April had witnessed tragedy in the Champagne: tragedy in which wounded men as well as the troops bore their share. I suppose it was vowed by men in authority that when the carefully prepared autumn attack on the Chemin des Dames should take place, there would be such a prodigal supply of accommodation for the wounded that, even in the unlikely contingency of a reverse and a successful German counter-attack, there should be adequate provision. Hence our offer to provide a hospital on that front was received with gratitude, and an old evacuation centre on a branch railway—a camp of hutments almost on the direct line to Soissons and Vauxaillon—was furbished up and placed at our disposal. There our new hospital sprang up, mushroom-like. Nothing could have been more different than this ultra-modern *baraque* hospital from our own ancient *Abbaye*. Rows of wooden huts, with oiled-paper windows and composition roofs, on either side a new road sweeping through the camp to the railway line at the back, each with its sharply cut trench, its duck-board walk and bridge. It made no mark for the eye at even a very little distance, the plough-land coming up to it in waves, the forest screening it. In a few years, one felt, no trace of it would be there—the corn and the trees would have grown over its very site.

As a hospital it was equipped with our best, staffed with our finest, and the long breathing-space between its inception in July and the actual attack in October, 1917, gave ample opportunity to perfect the most insignificant detail. Yet, when the attack developed, it was only as a Reserve Hospital that our people waited, breathless. It could only have been under a reverse that the new hospital would have been called up to play a part like the one the *Abbaye* had played during the Somme. Yet they waited, tense, expectant—and we, at the old hospital, at the other end of a wire, waited too, half jealous of the possibilities of work before this new upstart child of ours, half afraid that after all it would not get its chance to prove its parentage. Happily the attack was successful beyond all expectation. The hospitals in reserve, ours among them, had not been needed. The reason for its waiting, empty, having ceased to exist, was because

it was made use of, desultorily, as a hospital for light cases, and later for *malades* and ordinary operation cases.

If life in the early days of the *Abbaye* had been free and unrestrained, here in camp it became entirely untrammelled. Right through to the winter, when the thermometer in the staff huts stood twenty-two degrees below zero, our women led the roughest of open-air existence.

At our new hospital we had certain innovations, departing utterly from our old principle of the woman-staffed hospital, for the military authorities allocated to us a score of military orderlies—unfit and convalescent men, still technically patients at the neighbouring huge hospital for *malades*, in connection with which our own was originally established. They were not of very much use as trained hospital orderlies, though as hewers of wood and drawers of water, easy-going substitutes for our own junior orderlies in the more unskilled and menial tasks, they were of considerable assistance in a scattered camp.

When my three years' term of service was almost finished, I had the opportunity of working for a few weeks as *locum* at this new hospital. This was in the winter of 1917. I saw for myself what a creditable offspring of our old hospital this new one was. We had one busy week while I was there, when a train of wounded was unloaded at our siding, and about a hundred of our beds were filled. During the remainder of the time, we were not particularly busy, and I, along with those who were off duty and could get away for a few short hours, had opportunity for long walks in the forest of Villers-Cotterets, visits to Corcy, Longpont, and the war-scarred little hamlet that sits on the crest of a hill, on the doorstep, as it were, of Cœuvres. On one occasion I drove, with our milk-collecting car through the forest to La Ferté Millon, across the plain of the Oureq to Chézy. It was ground of extraordinary interest. It all spoke of the great battle of the Marne that in 1914 saved Paris and the Allied cause. It was the agony of 1914 that was brought home to me in the forest of Villers-Cotterets, with its shell-torn trees, its little scattered graves of Scottish Highlanders and English Guardsmen. Nothing was further from our thoughts in 1917, then a second agony of anxiety for Paris in the forest of Villers-Cotterets, a second great victory of the Marne. As little did we, at the *Abbaye*, dream that Noyon, the town from which during 1917, our light cases were evacuated to us, would once more become German, and that quiet little Compiègne, where the washing was sent and our chauffeurs got their driving-passes, in four months' time would be evacuated by all but the vanguard of an army barring the road along the Oise valley to Paris. Once again the enemy tried to drive his wedge

between the British and French forces down our own valley of the Oise to the heart of France. There was great anxiety at Soissons, at Villers-Cotterets too, down whose forest roads our other hospital had the pain of watching British troops marching in retreat.

The War had come again very close to the old *Abbaye*. Troops and guns streamed along the roads. Newly cut trenches disfigured the fields. A great bomb-hole, full of water like a pond, gaped not fifty yards from the Concierge's lodge. We had steady routine work for about three weeks, then a week in mid-May of comparative idleness. Then the blow came. It was the 27th May, 1917. Our Médecin-chef came back from local (medical) headquarters with a sheaf of sudden orders. She had always maintained an isolated view that the next chapter in the story of the campaign would open on the Aisne: it was a kind of presentiment, an *idée fixe*, and she had taken it into deliberate account in making plans for the two hospitals. A list of staff to be transferred to the Villers-Cotterets hospital was in existence; those members of the personnel whose names were on it had been warned long since to be in readiness to move at two hours' notice. So that afternoon two car-loads of rather bewildered, somewhat sceptical staff accompanied her to our new hospital on the borders of the great forest.

We, at the *Abbaye*, heard little of them for two days. But the news of the German surprise offensive on the Aisne filled us with anxiety. We heard late on the 28th that our people were acting as a Casualty Clearing Station, that the theatre staff we had sent up had not been to bed, but was operating ceaselessly night and day. Next we heard, with profound relief, that the hospital was to be evacuated to Meaux. We also received an order from our Chief that we were to empty our *Abbaye* and have as many beds ready for eventualities as possible. Then silence. On the 30th the news in the communiqué was so bad that we felt justified in fearing that Villers-Cotterets was already in German hands. At Royaumont we had spent the night of the 29th and the early morning of the 30th in evacuating the wounded, reducing our number to sixteen. Then came a telephone message from our Médecin-Chef, laconic, unembroidered: "Send up all the cars you possibly can, immediately. The hospital has to be evacuated." So they were still there, at Villers-Cotterets, and the enemy, for all we knew, on the point of entering the town. How our remaining chauffeurs worked, for the two who had taken up staff had not come back! Afterwards we learned that they had been commandeered by the authorities to help evacuate Soissons. Everything on wheels at the garage was made to go somehow, and volunteer drivers for the extra ambulances

were found among the orderlies. Some of the temporarily broken-down cars had to have a driver and a mate to pump petrol all the way. Another was taken off the jacks by our mechanic (a wounded soldier awaiting his discharge), patched up, and put on the road within a couple of hours. I do not know how much they all exceeded the speed limit that evening on the stretches of road that were clear! There were miles when they had to creep in and out of more slowly moving convoys. As they neared Villers-Cotterets they met unceasing traffic—the mixed traffic of a forced retreat. The Germans were already shelling the town, and were reported to be at Longpont, seven kilomètres distant by forest path from the hospital camp.

Meanwhile, the order to evacuate to Meaux had been rescinded, and a counter-order received that the hospital was to unpack its outfit and be ready to receive a hundred seriously wounded cases at once. So the equipment, packed in haste, was unpacked again in record time, the beds set up, the theatre refurnished and stocked and the X-ray plant re-wired and re-erected. After that there had been no pause in the work till 1 p.m. on the 30th—the day of the message to us at the **Abbaye**—and Villers-Cotterets had been bombarded from the air by night and by day. During the night of the 29th (while we at the **Abbaye** had been getting through our emergency evacuation to the accompaniment of our nightly air raid), the immediate neighbourhood of the camp had been attacked with such fury that the hospital—in pitch darkness except for the theatre where they made shift to work by the light of a couple of carefully shaded candles—escaped as by a miracle. The theatre, into which the wounded men were carried just as they had fallen, was described as a hell and a shambles. Operations continued all night amid the crashing of bombs and the thunder of ever-approaching guns; the explosions of a train of munitions on the line; next, the destruction of a level-crossing keeper's cottage within a stone's throw of their own siding; the operating hut, with its plank floor and the tables and instruments on them literally dancing to the explosions; the flickering candles; the anxiety for those newly operated; the still more awful fear that the French might have miscalculated and that the door might be thrown open and a German officer walk in on them. . . . (It had already happened to a French hospital nearer the Aisne.)

They had worked on up to the last moment, hardly heeding, after the terror of the exploding bombs, the long whine at regular intervals overhead that told of enemy shells. Then the Military authorities gave the order that not a single further case must be operated on—that the hospital must be evacuated at once. The relief of the poor fellows lying helpless in the wards was pitiful. For

some of them the long road journey by ambulance to safety from the enemy might mean death, but they were all glad to go.

Meanwhile, the two cars that had gone up with the staff and had been with them since the evacuation of Soissons, had filled up with some of the younger girls, and come through to us at the **Abbaye**, bringing us the first detailed news we had. It was an American ambulance that had taken our wounded away with a Sister in each car to keep an eye on the operation cases. Next, the Médecin-Chef had despatched two parties of the juniors, in charge of two of the younger doctors, on foot, with instructions to make their way as best they could, via Crépy-en-Valois and Senlis, to the **Abbaye**. Some of them, we learned later, got lifts in military **camions**: some of them were able to board a train of empty trucks at Vaumoise, and from thence to travel by stages to Chantilly. You can picture them, each with her knapsack and an odd bundle or two, sitting in a tightly packed row on the floor of a dirty truck, their legs dangling over the edge, their heads nodding as they dozed, even under such conditions, so tired were they. Most of them were eventually picked up by our ambulances at Crépy or Senlis. Some were so tired after the unceasing strain and the long march, that they stopped the night at villages **en route**—only to be disturbed by Flying Fritz, who was exceedingly prodigal of his bombs just then. Two Sisters, with a **sangfroid** of which I envied them, spent the night at a railway junction in a railway carriage that had been damaged by a bomb on the preceding night—and slept. A small party remained with the Médecin-Chef at the camp, hours after the last wounded man had been taken to safety, collecting and roughly packing the more valuable equipment—such as drugs, dressings, and electrical apparatus—in case the military authorities should later be able to transport it to the rear. Everything, including the trunks of the personnel, was stacked up on the hospital railway siding under shelter. When our cars got through to them, German aeroplanes were renewing the attack on the town, and the shelling was becoming very dangerous. A bag or suitcase apiece for each member of the staff, the theatre instruments, and some X-ray tubes were packed into the lorry with about eight of the party, the rest following in two ambulances.

The first of our cars to get back to us from Villers-Cotterets—one having been there since the 27th—brought us disquieting news of the fast approach and near neighbourhood of the Germans. When a bomb fell, as it seemed to our strained ears, in a field just behind us, and a big machine just skimmed the ruined tower above our heads, we plunged into the old monkish cellars beneath the **Abbaye** and waited tensely. . . . But no bomb

fell on the building, or near it. Instead, we heard the welcome hum of our own lorry's engine, which came creeping, all lights out, into the garage yard. It was a very tightly packed and shaken party—including the fox terrier—that tumbled out. They had run right through the centre of the air attack as it had concentrated on a certain town on their road.

All our cars were in by 5 a.m., and all had adventures. All the chauffeurs, within the next two weeks, made still closer acquaintance with Flying Fritz, on their road to Senlis, where many wounded were collected. Most of them made tip-and-run dashes into Villers-Cotterets to salve the X-ray apparatus, dressings and drugs, and the trunks of the personnel until they were forbidden to take such risks for any but wounded men. Night after night they faced the raiders, for from about the middle of May, 1917, until July the enemy came over practically every night, and if he did not always visit our immediate neighbourhood, our drivers usually had to meet him somewhere on their long run to Senlis, and they had some narrow escapes.

(To be continued.)

### From Far and Near

**Mrs Alison.** We are sorry to hear you have been ill and hope you are feeling better since you sent us that lovely post card of a glorious sunset somewhere in the Caribbean I think. It doesn't appear, however, that you have managed the length of South Africa as you had hoped. It must have been a great thrill for your grandson to receive your car as a gift on the occasion of his 21st birthday.

**Armstrong.** Enclosing a letter with her subscription, Armstrong asks for news of Rolt as she hadn't heard from her for some time. (She will have got my reply by now. Edit.)

She writes: "The other day, on television, I was watching a 'documentary' when, suddenly, in a flash, some place very familiar came on the screen. Yes, indeed, it was Royaumont and, strolling round the Abbey grounds was the subject of our 'documentary.' It was a wonderful surprise. As regards my health, I am fairly well except of this **here old age**, of which I take a poor view. Affectionate Greetings to all."

**Mrs Bushby** (Sister Adam). Sorry not to see your name on the list of members present at the Reunion Tea Party in London. There is to be another during the autumn of this year so hope you will be able to go then. Rose Morris and you are the two faithful Sister-Retainers of the Association. Greetings from us all.

**Barclay** (Mrs Golding). We read parts of

Barclay's letter to the members who were present at the Reunion luncheon in Edinburgh last June. We were most interested in what she told us of Rhodesia and how life in it was affected by the present struggle. Barclay affirms that the most important thing today is **contact**—contact between nation and nation and race with race. It is the most likely factor of promoting world peace.

Her granddaughter, Susan, is hoping to get an A.F.S. (American Field Service) Scholarship when she has taken her G.C.E. On gaining the Scholarship it means a year in America, living with an American family and going to the same school as the daughter of the house nearest in age to herself. It is a wonderful idea. Good luck to Susan. (Hope to hear from you again. Edit.)

**Daunt.** In a letter to the Editor Daunt expresses her sorrow over Rolt's death: "I cannot say in words my sorrow on learning of the death of Rolt. I had not heard from her for two months and she then seemed well, but of course she never complained. She was an inspiration to me, so much so, that when tempted to complain over my trivial afflictions, my thoughts went to her and her marvellous courage, and I was ashamed. She was always so full of life and enjoyed it all. One has so many memories of gay doings together. One that will amuse you is the following. On our way home from Royaumont we spent a hilarious few days in Paris together with a free pass only for as far as Folkestone or Dover—I forget which. Our pockets were empty, and we each had to get far afield, Rolt to Cumberland and myself to County Cork. After serious consultation we decided to beard the R.T.O. in his den and see if we could melt his heart. We knew that 'Gentlemen prefer Blondes' so Rolt was to attack him whilst I was to sit on the luggage outside the door and look as forlorn as possible. But he turned her down and said we were not attached to the British Army. We then decided to continue sitting on our luggage and 'weeping.' At intervals during the next half hour we saw our R.T.O. peeping out of his office to see if we were still there. We were, and we were continuing to 'weep.' At long last we were rewarded by a short 'D—mn you, come in.' So we went in and, better still, came out with a 1st class warrant to Cumberland for Rolt, and a 1st class to Ballinean, Co. Cork, for me! He just couldn't resist Rolt."

"I have really no interesting news. The Tourist influx was not so large as most years, still I had a few who came to gaze at the 'oldest inhabitant,' and one of them really proved that 'bread, cast on the waters, came back,' etc. One man, a scientist, arrived from Bramwell. I gave him tea and, as we drank, he gazed round the room and spotted a Meissen group. He asked me



where the top of it was and I told him sadly that a guest had broken it. He then told me his hobby was antique china and that he was an expert repairer of it. Would I allow him to take it away and he would return it in perfect condition. He did."

Daunt ends thus: "This is a dull letter, but it has given me much pleasure to talk to you. Please forgive me."

**Forrest** (Poppet). We are very glad to have Forrest on our list of members. In a note to the Editor from Main, she said that Forrest had been rushed into hospital about Christmas time. She had meant to go and stay with her niece in Edinburgh, so it was rather an unpleasant surprise to be forced to spend the festive hours in hospital. Can any member tell us how she is now?

**Dr Henry.** She and her husband took a most interesting trip through the Rockies last summer. "At Vancouver we boarded the C.N. 'George' for the 8-day trip up the west coast of British Columbia to Alaska. It was just wonderful. We had a steady diet of snow-capped mountains, glaciers, and icebergs, sea and skies. We went ashore here and there to visit an Indian Chief in his ancient "Residence" with totem poles.

"Back in Vancouver, we crossed to Victoria and spent a week at Esquimalt right on the cliff. A lovely garden lay between the house and the Strait of Juan de Fuca with a view over the Pacific to the distant Olympian Mountains of the U.S.A. It was all something to remember.

"We have acquired a 3/12 old Dalmatian pup with a grand name registered in France. To us she answers to 'Sally.' Her mother, born near Paris and brought up in the French Alps, came here two years ago and was bred to the Dalmatian Champion of these parts."

**Large** (Mrs Wilson) writes in better spirits this year. We hope her knee is all right again. We wish she would choose the time of her Highland holiday (apparently an annual event) to coincide with the Royaumont Reunion in Edinburgh which was in June last year. A lovely month to see Edinburgh and the Scottish Highlands! (Please consider.)

Large attended the funeral of Burrard's husband who died lately.

**Leishman.** —has quite settled down in Peebles now. She was a good Royaumont Samaritan when she accompanied the Editor (not too mobile at the time) to Hampshire last July. We had each visits to make in the county, but met again in London for the journey north by coach. We chose the night Service which we quite enjoyed except that we had to tumble out at Carlisle at 4.30 a.m. It was ghastly. We seemed to be the only travellers

from the London coach who had to make a change here. We shall try and avoid this adventure next time.

**Littlejohn** (Mrs Hedderwick). —was in charge of the kitchen when I arrived at Royaumont in August, 1915. We were very pleased to see her at one of the Scottish Reunions, and later she and her daughter arrived to see me in one of the wonderful modern caravans one sees on the roads nowadays. I hope they come again. (Edit.)

Her daughter told me the following story: "One day we had a nasty blaze-up from glue I was working with. It went on fire on the stove. My mother saw the sheet of flame but retired quietly back to what she was doing. I asked her afterwards if she was not frightened seeing the flames. She replied: "Oh, no, we often had blazes like that at Royaumont with the fat pans. Nothing to get alarmed about!"

**M'Gregor** (Mrs Hallam). We were glad to have news of M'Gregor from a letter to Stewart enclosing her subscription. She writes: "I never seem to be able to go to any Reunion, tea, lunch or dinner, so greatly look forward to seeing the News Letter. It does let one know what some of the old folks are doing. I keep fit and am on a great many village things. I always swear that I am coming off all Committees—yet I seem to arrive back. I am much too ancient for such things, but the youth of today doesn't seem to have the time to do the odd jobs—they either have families to cope with or a full-time job. One grandson is in the Army, and the other still at School. The Army one is in Signals and the school boy hopes to be a brewer! Why a brewer, I know not, but there it is. He hopes to get to Heriot Watt's which seems to be the brewer's College." (It is good to hear from you. We all regret very much that you never turn up at Reunions—either North or South. Perhaps we shall see you some day at the London Tea Party. That is easier for you to get to than the Edinburgh lunch. We might be able to live on until Grandson No. 2 arrives at Heriot Watt's? We hope to organise a Reunion Tea Party in London for 1967.) M'Gregor sends best wishes to all Royaumonts and V.C.'s.

**M'Naughton** (Mrs Crowther). She remembers Carmichael and was sorry to hear of her death. Meeting her in Edinburgh a few years ago she got her to come to one of our Tea Parties there and hoped she would continue to help us all to fly the Royaumont flag as the years sped onwards. M'Naughton writes: "As you know she was always the very quiet and retiring type and I am sorry to say I lost contact with her until I heard she had gone to a Nursing Home as she could not find accommodation to give her attendance. I tried hard to find out which Nursing Home, but without

success." (We hope M'Naughton enjoyed her visit to Madeira. She flew there on 19th October. We wish also to send her our sympathy on the death of her brother in Los Angeles whom they were expecting to see in Edinburgh, but ill health prevented him from coming. The Editor has to thank M'Naughton for a very pleasant afternoon chez elle during Christmas time.—Edit.)

**Manson** (Mrs Falconer). We are very sorry to hear of the tragic death of Manson's husband. He was out exercising a beloved horse round his own fields. He was chatting away to the groom when suddenly a twinge of pain forced him to dismount—and all was over. He was a very well known man and much respected in the Border country. We send Manson and her daughter our deepest sympathy.

**Middleton.** The Association wishes Middleton many happy years in her new home at Brancaster, Norfolk. It will be a great change from London, but perhaps she will be like the Editor, quite enjoy village life, especially a village at the sea. We have lochs and mountains here, all very beautiful.

**Moffet.** —has had a rather chequered 1966. Her sister Una has been ill for some considerable time but is now progressing, we are all glad to hear. We thank her for organising the Tea Party in London for those members who are unable for various reasons to come so far for the Reunion in Edinburgh. A Report of both will be found in the News Letter.

**Nicholson** ("Nicky"). The Editor writes: "Nicky is busy making arrangements to go with some friends to the Tyrol in May. We wish her good weather and a happy time. She and her sister visited me last spring and found the Hotel next door very comfortable. (I have only the one bedroom in my old cottage built in 1746. I wonder if Bonnie Prince Charlie ever passed by?) Nicky arrived chez moi holding something voluminous under each arm. They were gifts for the "lady of the manor." Under one arm was a huge pot of budding and blossoming pelargoniums, a wonderful sight and under the other, something perhaps more wonderful still, a bottle of vintage Beaujolais! I hope she comes again to New Galloway. Bon voyage. Ne vous perdez pas dans les montagnes."

**Rose Morris** is still the same devoted Royaumontite. We had lunch with Ramsay and her sister while up in Edinburgh for Christmas. We had a good chatter about Royaumont affairs and an excellent lunch which we enjoyed.—Edit.

**Simpson** (Mrs Gray). —was at the Reunion in June and seemed in excellent spirits. She had spent a very happy holiday in Cornwall with her family. She speaks of going South again to visit

old friends of Indian days. "They keep asking me to come. Perhaps it's age, but my mind wanders many times to these happy days."

**Simms.** We received the following account of a trip to Tunisia from Simms. Yes, Simms! we have been trying to get into contact for a long time, but Smeal, acting as intermediary, has managed it. Simms writes: "I went to Tunisia this time as I always choose somewhere that's warm and sure to be sunny. I booked at Ingham's for a week at a seaside resort and a week's tour, staying each night at a different place. To my surprise they placed me in a hotel at Sousse. All the tourists were Continentals, chiefly Swiss and German, in addition to a Belgian couple and two elegant Austrians on their honeymoon. I didn't come across a single English person during the whole fortnight. I must say that I preferred this, although, if I hadn't known a certain amount of French, the tour might not have been quite so enjoyable, because the Tunisian Guide who accompanied us spoke only French or German. He said he had never had an English person before on his tours.

"Tunisia is not so interesting as Morocco. The scenery is rather dull but the beaches are lovely and the water so warm that to swim in it was a pure delight. Tunisia is cleaner than Morocco chiefly because of the laws and precepts that President Bourguiba lays down in the towns and villages. He is very strict with the people and does all he can to attract the tourist. He frowns on begging, and so the natives are not so troublesome as they are in other Arab countries. He also insists on equality between Arabs and negroes. The people seem to love their President.

"King Feisel of Saudi Arabia visited Tunisia during our stay in the country. The procession of King and President and their retinues was most imposing. They were escorted by streams of motor cycles.

"Tunisia will soon be spoilt by the erection of enormous hotels and skyscrapers are springing up like mushrooms.

"**How I missed seeing Royaumont.** In June, 1966, I took the bike to Le Havre, crossing by night, intending to tour round the Isle de France and revisit some of the old haunts. On the 4th day I reached Royaumont. It was closed to visitors in the mornings, much to my disappointment. So I started off for Chantilly intending to return when, for some unknown reason, the 3-speed gear went wrong. A garage hand took it to bits but could not do anything about it. A large bicycle shop at Chantilly wouldn't look at it. So I had to return home by train! I wish now that I had tried every possible shop in Chantilly because, on taking the bike to Newton Abbot, learned there was nothing wrong—just needed tightening of the hub."

I still help at Teignmouth Hospital four mornings a week. It's hard on the feet, that's all!"

(Sorry you couldn't give us a picture of the old Abbey as it is today. The bike did let you down. Glad to hear of you and thanks for the contribution to the News Letter. Send some more next time.—Edit.)

**Smeal.** Smeal writes: "As I imagine you may be tearing your hair in your valiant efforts to produce the News Letter, and my own news being pretty dull, I asked Simms' permission to send an account of all her travels to you.

"My own news, as I said, not very exciting—but I did enjoy the London Tea Party, jolly enough to make one forget the horrid rainy day to which we were 'treated.'

"These last few years I've been trying to knock a bit of Spanish into my old 'noddle.' Now I've got a Spanish pupil for English lessons—three a week—so I'm brushing up my English." (Thanks for acting intermediary between Simms and me. Glad we have got into contact with her. Is it possible to get any news of Summerhayes?—Edit.)

**Torrance.** It was Torrance and M'Naughton who sent us news of Carmichael's death. Carmichael was the first orderly who greeted Torrance on her arrival at Royaumont and, on the strength of that introduction, they became friends both during and after the war. A rather extraordinary coincidence occurred the first day they went into Paris together. They discovered en route that they were both going to the same address, but to see quite different people, Carmichael to see her aunt and Torrance to visit a friend!

**Williams.** She writes from her new home in Spain: "The Gibraltar affair arouses very little feeling either way on this part of the coast; in fact, several Spaniards have said to us: 'We don't want the Rock. We wouldn't know what to do with it if we had it.' We rather feel the whole thing has blown up as a result of our Government's stupidity and lack of any appreciation of the Spanish character and also as a prestige matter for Franco. He would like to have ended up his 30 years in power with the announcement that the 'Rock' had been ceded to Spain. Once we can admit and recognise that 'pride' is all that has remained to Spain for hundreds of years, and can adjust oneself to admit this outstanding characteristic, then social contacts are easy. Never laugh at them but with them, never accept a gift or be under an obligation without returning it in some form or other, and never expect them to accept a gift without being ready to accept something from them. If we give our maid any old clothes she will bring us a plant, or flowers or oranges next day, and so on. The climate is wonderful on the whole, though in winter we get high winds and rain

once or twice a month. I feel better than I have done for years, but, of course, I lead a very lazy life. Having the car here is a great boon as with it there are few days I have to stay indoors. We have had our terrace glassed in with windows that fold right back in the summer and this makes a wonderful winter garden."

Since writing this letter, Peter (Williams) has sent me a snap of the charming little house that Barbara, her sister, and she have built for themselves.

**Peter (Madame Campora).** We began to think that we were not to hear from Peter this time, but a letter arrived to the Editor this morning for which many thanks.

"Lucien and I jog along very happily and comfortably in our little nutshell of a house, but do nothing of any interest to other people. The children are all well, and we much enjoy being so near Andy, our youngest, and her six children. So far the winter has been very mild here, no real cold so far and quite a lot of sun. Andy and I often take the two babies—Jean 2½ and Benoit 15 months—into the forest after lunch, where they enjoy themselves scrambling up the enormous granite boulders. I'm convinced that the 15 months old will be an alpinist, for nothing daunts him!"

(Vous dites que vous n'avez rien d'intéressant à nous raconter? Mais il n'y a rien au monde plus beau que juste ce que vous nous avez écrit. Merci.—Edit.)

### Letter from Australia from FIGGIS

Figgis writes on a good many subjects, from Royalty, Australian stamps, hospital fees and politics down to the comical incidents of the Royaumont period.

**Prince Charles in Australia.** "The two terms at Timbertop School spent by H.R.H. Prince Charles gave great pleasure to this country. He seemed to enjoy all his time here. Of course, he worked to a different curriculum from most of the other boys and was taken to many specially chosen places in between his studies. The Prince's tact and charm won all hearts.

**Australian stamps.** With regard to those I sent the Editor last year, I found on reading an old News Letter that it was Minchen who collected stamps. She was in Switzerland ill with arthritis or something similar many years ago and I collected the stamps for her but did not send them away at the time. I regretted that I had not done so when I heard of her death some time afterwards.

Stamps are greatly sought after for hospitals here as a means of revenue. I have heard, however, that the British hospitals are so well supported that they are not pressed for funds as those in Australia are. Hospitals here are run on exorbitant lines and are mostly all in debt. The fee for my sister's room in hospital when she had bronchial pneumonia was £68 weekly, and the fee for her special nurse was £6 a day without insurance.

**Political thoughts.** Democracy does not spell perfection to my way of thinking. The present politicians are avid for the fruits of office, short hours and free travel as soon as they are elected.

**Architecture** at present is a sorry change from the old style that gave not only beauty but comfort.

Natural gas and vast quantities of various metals have been discovered of late years. If only Japan were not being given carte blanche in the purchase of these! Mr Holst has the difficult task of trying to curb this."

And now for the Royaumont stories. Does anyone remember them?

"Ashton, Glossop and myself set out one day for Longpont. Our farm cart of two wheels had no seat, just a plank of wood covered with any old rags. The horse, Renaud by name, was an old horse from the Royaumont farm and had been wounded in the shoulder by shrapnel. We climbed aboard and Renaud started off, but just at this moment the *ravitaillement* made up on us and Renaud halted to let the train of little field kitchens pass by. This was too much for his martial spirit, and he made a swift move into the line where there happened to be a gap. The result was catastrophic. We three occupants were violently thrown off our wooden plank on to the floor of the cart, heels in the air. This caused great laughter and poor old Renaud, looking very abashed, was led back on to the 'strait path' by poilus very much amused at our discomfiture."

Still in a nostalgic frame of mind, Figgis continues: "Does anyone remember the time when a newly arrived *blessé* (I think he was an Arab) was told to go and have a bath, the *salle de bains* being indicated by a wave of the hand from the 'Seester.' A few moments after, on entering the *salle de bains* to see how he was getting on, we found him inside the 'marmite' pacing up and down in the water with all his might, the temperature of the water gradually increasing every minute! We hauled and got him out, and he was none the worse for which we were truly thankful."

There were more stories, but the seams of our News Letter are at bursting point and the "LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA" had to be closed.

Dear Scottish women,

I doubt if this will interest you, but I hope it will. As some of you know I have been in "The Mousetrap" for 11 years, at least I had been until one night in June 1965, when I started for the Theatre, as usual at 10 minutes to 7. This I can remember, but from the moment I sat down in the Tube my mind is a complete blank until I woke up in Charing Cross Hospital with the Stage Manager of "The Mousetrap" sitting beside me! I have been told that I never went near the Theatre I walked straight into Charing Cross Hospital and said I felt ill. A Doctor came to see me, at once, as I suppose they could see I was unconscious, found that I had pneumonia and he says that I asked him to ring the Theatre and tell them where I was, I even gave them the name and the number to ring and he must be telling the truth as he did it, but I can hardly believe it. They must also have looked in my bag, I suppose, as I carry the name and address of my next of kin in that and my nephew's wife arrived soon after with a nightdress. Up to that time I had been dressed in an operation garment. The next thing I can remember is waking up to find a nurse trying, with all her might, to pull my teeth out. I asked, furiously, "What are you doing?" and she said, "I want your teeth," to which I replied, "then fetch a dentist." I do not remember this conversation, but the Nurse told me. They were not used to people of my age having their own teeth apparently.

I was in Charing Cross for about 3 weeks and then, because the theatre was making such a fuss, I went back to work, but I was only able to play for three performances and then I nearly died on the stage in earnest and when the curtain came down they had, very nearly, to carry me off. After that the understudy had to play until someone else took on for good. Of course, this was quite legal I have no doubt, but I thought it was a little hard after 11 years with only one fortnights' holiday. The following week I tripped over an uneven paving stone and needless to say took no notice of a painful knee until about a week later when my leg swelled and got very painful, so I drove myself to our local hospital and was told I could not even go home to fetch a nightdress as I had thrombosis. Needless to say I drove home, followed by an ambulance, packed a bag, parked the car, and was taken back in an ambulance! I had even a longer stay in Fulham Hospital than I had in Charing Cross. Since all this happened I have only been able to get a few days' work on T.V. and life is not only dull but rather difficult, although I have been able to let half the house to 4 or 5 girls from a Government office. I find life without a car or a job or a relative of MY generation very dull and

unpleasant, but I suppose I shall have to get used to it.

All I can do now is to wish you all better luck and health than I have had lately and to assure you that I have every intention of returning to health, wealth and WORK very soon.

JOHN EVELYN MOORE.

### The Heroism of a French Priest

By Hilda Smeal

To all lovers of the Châteaux of the Loire, the name of Chambord is familiar. But how many know that during the Second World War the historic Château of Chambord was used as a secret Storing-Place for many of the priceless Art Treasures from France's National Museums, including the world-famous Sculpture and Pictures from the Louvre in Paris? And how many have heard of the heroism of the local Priest—the Abbé Gilg—who, in the dark days of August, 1944, when the fate of the village and of the Château with all its treasures hung in the balance, stepped forward, braving the enemy rifles, and by his skilful persuasion succeeded in saving this precious heritage for the benefit of future generations?

About ten miles from the picturesque town of Blois, Chambord is a peaceful village on the banks of the gently-flowing River Cosson (a tributary of the Loire), framed in a fairyland of forest which, in days gone by, echoed with the sound of the hunting horns of the Kings of France. In the centre of this rural landscape stands the Château, dominating the scene like a gigantic turreted battleship, anchored in a billowing green sea of forest.

The thought of it conjures up a picture of tranquil serenity. It was, however, far from serene in the summer of 1944, and even before that, because its very serenity and its vast forest helped to serve as a cloak for many a Maquisard. The forest was being exploited by the French State Waterways and Forestry Department (chiefly for the making of charcoal to be used as a substitute for petrol) and this official work became very popular with young Frenchmen as a means of avoiding the dreaded service in Germany to which they were otherwise subjected.

In August, 1944, when the Germans' one idea was to retreat with as few casualties as possible before the advancing Allies, many a deed of daring was enacted at Chambord and in its surroundings: The Maquis barred the roads with enormous trees to hamper the enemy retreat, stored arms and munitions in the houses, and in a skirmish near the village, a German soldier was killed. The scene was indeed set for reprisals such as had, alas! been practised in many similar cases. . . .

Maintaining that they had been fired on from the top of the Château and from an upper room of the neighbouring Hotel St. Michel, the Germans threatened to set fire to the entire village, including the Château and all its famous treasures. Forty men were taken as hostages. The women and children were herded into the Château, whilst the men were lined up in one of its courtyards, armed sentinels being posted in all directions. Fires were started in several places, chiefly in the Hotel St. Michel. Bullets began to fly around.

Nothing daunted, and in spite of his advancing years, the Abbé Gilg, a stalwart black-robed figure, disregarding the enemy rifles which were pointed at him, fearlessly accosted a German Sergeant and asked to see the Commanding Officer. Being a native of Alsace and speaking perfect German, the Abbé was determined to use this advantage to calm the German fury, and to do all in his power to save the village and its inhabitants.

His first task was to convince the Germans that their claims of having been fired on from the Château and from the Hotel were unfounded. Intrigued by the Abbé's perfect command of their language, the German Officers to whom he had been conducted by the Sergeant, asked how it was he spoke German so well. The Abbé then explained that he had taught German in different schools, and had been Chaplain to some German prisoners in World War One, adding that he said a prayer in German every night. He also told them that he had given French lessons to their German head-forester, pointing out that, although the latter at that time was the only German in the village, he had in no way been molested by the inhabitants. Greatly impressed by all this, as well as by the priest's cool courage and by his fluent German, after much further pleading by the Abbé, the German Officers consented to make a thorough search of the Château and of the Hotel. This they did. Finding nothing to confirm their suspicions, they gave the order for the fires to be extinguished and authorised the antiquated local fire-engine (which they had originally mistaken for a "secret weapon"! ) to go into action.

In spite of all the eloquence of the Abbé Gilg, tragedy, alas! was not wholly averted. Unknown to him, four men in whose homes arms and munitions had been found, were shot by the Germans. On the other hand, the forty hostages were released. Many houses and a good part of the Hotel St. Michel escaped the flames. And the Château, the famous Château, with all the incalculable wealth it contained, was saved for the benefit of humanity. What a debt, not only the inhabitants of Chambord, but Art Lovers throughout the World, owe to the Courage of a Country Curé!

SMEAL.

### Our Home among the Laurentian Hills

Dr Henry sends us this most interesting account of her Canadian home.

Forty miles away from the great city of Montreal, high up on the Laurentian plateau, lies our home. It is well marked out with its painted yellow walls and Chinese red doors. There are three acres of ground around it consisting of a high wooded hill—Mont Gabriel—with 13 ski slopes and 8 ski tows, all forming part of a Ski Club well known all over the Continent. It was no plan of ours when we built our cottage to find ourselves in the centre of this great Ski development, but there it is, and so it will remain.

The cottage is built on the slope, Swiss style. On the upper level is a large sitting-room with fireplace in the centre, a sun porch off this at one end, a kitchen and bathroom off the other. The lower level has the bedrooms, second bathroom, ski room, cold storage room and heating unit. It lies between the villages of Mont Rolland and St. Sauveur des Monts and has a panoramic view over ranges of hills. In the winter, on our arrival from the city, a warm house awaits us, but we light the log fire and it is not long before we are sitting in front of the glowing logs enjoying a cup of tea.

Our house is rarely empty, for the family come up from Montreal, and in the winter our days are busy with ski-ing parties, for ski-ing starts at our very door. When the moon rises we retire to our log fire and watch the splendour of its rising beyond the hills. At its full there will be black shadows of our trees charcoaled out on the sloping hillside. It is all very lovely. It is a restful time "entre chien et loup," a time to enjoy music and books. There is no television in our cottage to claim our time and disturb our thoughts, but we have a good record player and a large selection of long-playing records, also a transistor and well-filled book cases. There is every promise of a good evening before us. For the juvenile guest there are suitable books, games of checkers, and sometimes the 9 years old wants to inspect the big stamp collection I am preparing to hand over to him when he is capable of controlling it. And so to bed.

A nature study of the wild life around us. At the base of our apple tree are several holes in the snow leading to tunnels made by four red squirrels who use them to some effect. They wait until the blue jays and grosbeaks congregate for feeding, when they dart out and up the tree, frightening the birds that scatter in all directions. Two months ago the rusty red colouring of the squirrel becomes very marked. I don't know very much about the life history of the squirrel but I realised that nesting time was in progress when I noticed them stuffing their cheek pouches with the strands of cotton extracted from my new mop left at the kitchen

door! Thinking to add some contemporary art to their endeavour, I donated a few balls of double knitting wool in gay colours, but they preferred the white mop. The woods are happy hunting grounds for children. Rabbits in their white winter coats, birds of many kinds, traces of squirrels, foxes and porcupines wander over the snow. One can uncover tiny runs or tunnels for thousands of mice. The protection against their greed makes preparatory work in the autumn very hard. Each and every shrub and young tree must be bandaged with aluminium foil to save the bark from their teeth. Roses and lilacs they love, but their first choice is bulbs. These have to be embedded in strong wire cages with wire lids. As we are on the migration route we see many varieties of birds. Four weeks ago—for the first time—a flight of pink grosbeaks alighted for breakfast on the Canada honeysuckle berries. The male of the species is a gorgeous colour of bright raspberry and, when alight on the snow, looks beautiful. Now and then a flock of snow buntings fly over, their pure white under wings really strikingly lovely against the blue of the sky and we scamper to the door when we hear the familiar sound of Canada geese flying from the north in V formation. Talking again of squirrels one comes to our kitchen window the morning after arrival to beg for more pea nuts. The tiny tell-tale blue shadowy depressions over the virgin snow show us from which hole he has emerged. Soon we shall be able to lie out on deck chairs on the terrace to soak in sunshine and get a tan from the reflection off the snow, and two chipmunks (squirrels) we have tamed will emerge from their winter sleep and beg for a handshake.

The wood-cutters become busy. The old trees which the porcupine has ruined have to be cut down and sawn into 28 logs for our fireplace. The wood-cutters will need them, too, for they are sure to light a fire in the snow and probably, by way of an interlude, will seize the opportunity to toast marshmallows. The reward to a boy for work cheerfully accomplished is "in kind." Logs of his own sawing are loaded into his own car and transported proudly back to his parents.

Over and above the joy of our seasonal friends, we receive an occasional unexpected bonus, as on one occasion, when standing by a window at 10 p.m., the hills flooded in moonlight, we became aware of a stranger speeding over the snow towards the house. About 50 yards off it stopped, stood up on its hind legs and danced. It was a fox. He kept it up for several minutes. Half an hour later he returned and repeated the dance. This is something we may never see again. And we would welcome the repetition of an episode of a few years ago. We were lying out on the terrace in brilliant sunshine with snow quite deep in parts of the hillside. We had turned the radio on to a B.B.C. Easter service when some-

thing aroused our attention. A young deer was finding her way daintily over the snow towards our wood where I watched her for some time through my binoculars. This is not likely to happen again, now that the Auto-route has brought the City nearer.

So our winter has come to an end. We say Good-bye to the friends who have been our guests at the feeding stations and begin to watch for those who return in the spring. We know the exact date that the Canadian robin will fly in—a larger edition of his little British cousin—and we watch, on a date we mark on our calendar, for the swallows that build above our porch door—a joy to watch and also an anxiety when the young take their flight. And our hearts fill with fear with the return of a pair of hawks to our wood. We have watched them train their three young in hunting smaller birds, and we even witnessed them carrying off two of our baby swallows.

Are we isolated? No. We are only 40 miles from the largest French language City outside Paris. Friends drop in en route to their retreats. We have French Canadians near us whom we love.

When we went to acquire newly published reading matter, Blackwell, Oxford, is as near to us for orders as you are. Our radio supplies us with local and international news. We find the Manchester Guardian and Country Life in our mail box, and the mailman has just delivered to us the 1967 Catalogue of Flower Seeds.

### Visit to Holland

In the 1966 issue of the News Letter Nicky gave us a graphic description of the various horticultural lay-outs in Holland, among them being the flower auction at Alkmaar, the wonderful bulb gardens at Hillegom and the Municipal Nurseries of Amsterdam. But although these were the main objects of her visit to Holland she had many interesting sight-seeing episodes to recount. We shall now continue in her own words:

"We left London on the 3rd of May and returned on the 12th. This proved last year to be an excellent time for the tulips which were at their best, but there were still in bloom hundreds of hyacinths, both full size and grape hyacinths, and many daffodils and narcissi. The tour was most efficiently organised by the National Gardens Guild, who have run one on the same lines for many years. We found Amsterdam both beautiful and interesting. The city has a great history behind it and we hope also in front of it. Immediately in front of our hotel is a vast national memorial to those of the Resistance Movement who died during the last war. The first day of our visit happened to be the

day of national mourning for these heroes, and a service was held at the memorial, during which many wreaths were laid. On the following day some of our party laid a wreath on behalf of the Gardens Guild and afterwards, at the invitation of the Burgomaster, we drank coffee at the Town Hall. The Deputy Burgomaster received us and asked especially to speak to anyone of the party who came from Scotland, as his wife hails from Dumfries! Coffee was served in the beautiful Council Chamber, and we were each presented with one cigarette and a tie-pin bearing three crosses, the emblem of Amsterdam. These pins cannot be purchased; they are only obtainable as a gift from the City and are therefore much treasured. Mine is still in the lapel of the coat I wore during the trip. I was very interested in trying to find out how a burgomaster is appointed. All burgomasters are appointed by the Queen and serve until appointed to a larger city. They must be persons with very special qualities, such as great intelligence and savoir faire. Presumably, the Burgomaster of Amsterdam is at the top of the tree—an enviable position.

One day we were taken to see Queen Juliana's palace at Soestdijk and then to the battle area of Oosterbek. After listening to a short account of the battle of Arnhem and looking up the river into Germany, we were received by the Burgomaster of Oosterbek in the cemetery where 1700 English and Polish soldiers lie buried. The graves are beautifully cared for by the young people of the village. A wreath was laid by an ex-colonel in our party. The battlefield, Arnhem and its surrounding villages are now completely restored, and it is a very beautiful area.

At Alkmaar there is a wonderful market where one can buy all sorts of things, among which are Edam cheeses and wooden clogs of all sizes which one watches being made by very skilled workers. Many of the former and one or two of the latter found their way into our shopping bags or were ordered to be sent by post to England or elsewhere. Another most fascinating sight was the Lilliput City of Madurodam. Here everything is on 1/25th scale, and houses, shops, trains, ships and aeroplanes are perfect in construction. The little city is named after Lt. George Maduro, who died in Dachau concentration camp after the heroic resistance of Holland to the invasion of 1940 and was given to the nation by his parents.

In addition to the many outdoor beauties already described we also visited a number of the many picture galleries and museums. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is full of old masters, many of which we knew only in reproduction. At Haarlem we saw the wonderful Franz Hals collec-

tion by candlelight, and in the middle of the National Park at Otterloo we visited the Knoller-Mueller Museum and picture gallery, where a wonderful collection of pictures, both old and new, and sculptures and other works of art were on view. Altogether there were marvellous opportunities to increase our knowledge of Holland generally as well as to store up images of the wonderful flora of the country. It is a tour which has much to recommend it in interest and organisation."

Particulars can be obtained from the National Gardens Guild, Sharneden, Fourth Avenue, Stanfords-le-Hope, Essex. The cost was £46 10s.

Nicky.

### The Kiss of Morn

1

The Spirit of the Morn awaking, rose  
And kissed the world as slumbering he lay.  
But he looked sad even in deep repose,  
His cheeks stained with the tears of yesterday.

2

The Spirit of the Morn flew through the night  
To her good brother, Sun, and him besought  
To go with her that they together might  
Bring to the world some glad refreshing thought.

3

"Come brother Sun," she cried, "dispel the moon  
And these night stars, come help me to restore  
Peace to our stricken friend lest he should soon  
Wake to remember the dark day before."

4

Then, hand in hand, they hastened to the bed  
Wherein the sleeping world unheeding, lay.  
And as together they caressed his head,  
Behold! he woke, and sorrow passed away.

C. D. WARREN.

### Scillas

Among the stones the little scillas grow  
Blue as the sky above the Alpine snow.  
They care not for the riches of the earth  
Nor of the dignity of noble birth.  
The sunshine, stones and grit are all they need  
How very economical to feed!

C. D. WARREN.

### Changes of Address

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#### WHITEHORN

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London N.W.2.

#### WARREN

Windyridge,  
Buchanan Castle,  
Drymen,  
Stirlingshire.

### Statement of Accounts 1st February to 31st December, 1966

RECEIPTS			EXPENSES		
Carried forward 1st February, 1966	£59	4 6	George Outram & Co., Ltd., Printers	£16	17 6
Donation to News Letter from Arthur	0	15 0	Miller, News Letter Expenses	1	16 3
Donation to News Letter from Simms	0	15 0	Bank Charge	0	2 0
Subscriptions	8	0 6			
Total	£68	15 0	Balance in Bank	£49	19 3
Emergency Fund—Balance in Hand				£194	7 9



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