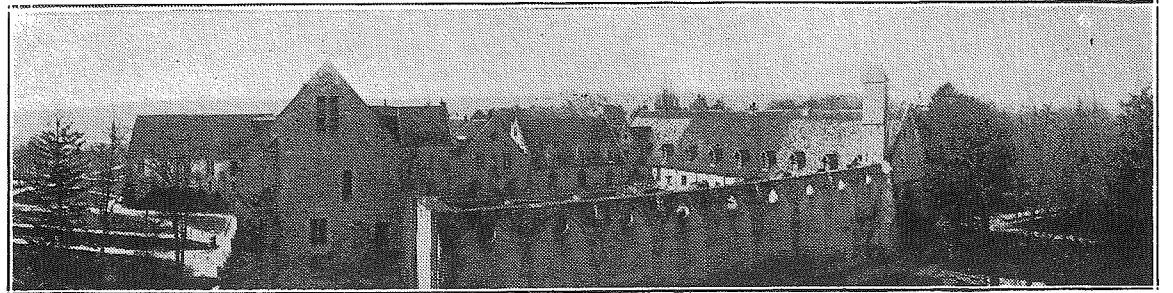


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Royaumont News-Letter



Vol. III.

NOVEMBER, 1934.

No. 9

Objects of the Association: To maintain and strengthen our war-time comradeship.

Subscription: Half-a-crown per annum due **December 1st** for following year.

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Subscribing Members can have letters addressed to them c/o the Hon. Treasurer at her house, where they can also consult the Association Address Book.

Editorial.

London Scottish calling, but there is no S.O.S. before the delightful editorial which we all enjoy so much, we do not seem to be able even to raise a "flap" for which Royaumont was at one time so famous. But, isn't it curious how to-day twenty years after the War, that little and tragi-comic part of our lives which we spent at Royaumont should stand out so clearly amongst much that is blurred and half-remembered? Quite apart from the fact that many of us were then at what is called "an impressionable age," none of the other war work some of us did before or after our time at Royaumont left the same clear cut imprint on our memories. Yet those of us who like Mrs,

Savill have visited Royaumont and its surroundings find that few if any of the inhabitants remember the strange badly dressed foreign ladies who worked there during the War.

The death of M. Poincaré took us back to an autumn day in 1916 when scrubbed and shining all the hospital staff prepared to receive him, and the delight of the blessés afterwards was in itself proof that M. and Madame Poincaré had been most sympathetic visitors. What the President really thought we shall never know, but apparently he was pleased, and he waved his white cotton-gloved hands in friendly fashion as he disappeared down the cloisters. It would be rather fun to have the historic Royaumont Visitors' Book

passed round at a Royaumont Dinner, or is it in some museum where no one can see it or if they do are simply bored.

Scotland is still the home of many loyal S.W.H. Members. Dr. Winifred Ross whom Royaumontites of the early days remember with affection, lives in Inverness-shire under the shadow of the beautiful Cairngorm mountains. Dr. Ross has had to give up her professional work on account of bad health, but she has become an expert ornithologist and is much in demand to help at all sorts of functions in the neighbourhood. Edinburgh, at one time the stronghold of the Committee, has several well-known Scottish Women living in and near it, and we are particularly glad to hear that Mrs. Russell is well and was greatly interested in news of Royaumontites, when Grandage called upon her this autumn. Wight's shop in Prince's Street from where our strange clothes emanated still tries to lure tourists inside with displays of tartan bags and Shetland shawls. Has any ball dress or such like ever given you the same thrill that you had when you opened up your S.W.H. uniform, gray coat, hat and cape complete with Gordon tartan trimmings? On each garment your name and rank printed in large letters (in case you should be Missing). The present editor was a "Dresser." "Dresser" she used to murmur as she undressed at night and her eyes caught the words, after a day in the scullery, "when shall I be promoted to that? Who are the Dressers?" There was one. Dr. Henderson. What happened to her?

**Letter to the Royaumont Unit from our
Médecin-Chef.**

Killagorden,
Truro, Cornwall.

My dear Unit,

This year seems to have flown, I suppose because one day in the country is so like another that one sometimes (like Dean Inge) forgets one's engagements. However the date of the Royaumont Dinner will need no special reminder. It has been a very pleasant year out of the noise and bustle of London, though occasional visits to town have been very delightful.

I have of course been letting myself go in the garden, which, as a garden always does, is beginning to show its gratitude. The brilliant summer, too, has brought out all the colour, and has made trees flower that have rarely flowered in this country before.

Royaumont memories have been vividly brought back by occasional talks I have given to the British Women's Legion and kindred bodies in some of the Cornish towns. They always appear to be keenly interested in the doings of the Unit.

I was very pleased to have a visit from Glossop, her husband and delightful little girl. They are living in a lovely spot a few miles away. I have also come across Major Aldham, whom some of you will remember as a very able chauffeur. He and his charming wife and daughter live at Bodmin. We had a great talk, and I also heard something of his War experiences after he left us.

I expect you have all been keenly interested in recent events in France, and have sympathised with our friend, M. Doumergue, the smiling President, in his strenuous efforts to save his country. It is encouraging to find that character does tell, and that the people of France know who is really disinterested. He has already encountered and surmounted great difficulties, but the Marseilles tragedy must have been a terrible blow, to be followed so soon by the death of that great patriot, M. Raymond Poincaré. France has indeed been in mourning.

Your affectionate chief,
FRANCES IVENS-KNOWLES.

Dr. Wilson.

MILLAR sends the following article about the late DR. WILSON, which she found quite by chance when staying with friends in Fife.

"Among the books of sorrow written during the War years is a little anthology, compiled by Estelle Blyth, called *Way of Healing: a little book for those who have known suffering*. 'It contains nothing new or original,' explains the maker of the book, 'it is a sheaf of great men's thoughts which seem to fit what may be called "Doctor's things" far better than anything I could have ventured to write myself on such a

big theme. . . . The Doctor in whose honour and for whose pleasure the book was made had died on War Service in France before it could be published. Though she never saw it, it is entirely her book, an offering to one who was in every sense a Healer, both of mind and body.

"Marian Elizabeth Wilson, the young doctor to whom the book is dedicated, was the only daughter of the late Rev. John Wilson, D.D., of Abernethy, Scotland. She graduated at Edinburgh in 1906, and died in France in 1917. The little anthology, made for her, is divided according to phases of a doctor's life and thoughts: 'The Great Physician,' 'Of suffering,' 'Of Hospitals and Friendly Places,' 'Of Medicines and Healing Herbs,' 'The Dark Hour,' and others, and from that point of view it is a wonderful collection of extracts. But at times these divisions may be ignored and *Way of Healing* may be read simply as a little book of sorrow and hope. As such, I think, it will make its widest appeal. . . .

"It is inspired by a doctor. She was so rare, she was so fine—and she had not the slightest idea of it. I use the word 'fine' in its true sense, as one speaks of fine linen and fine gold, and not with its usual showy meaning. Five people have I known intimately in all my life who *really* cared more for unseen things than seen ones, and she was one of them. But I have known only one in whom perfect sincerity went hand in hand with pretty courtesy, and it was she who died on active service in France two years ago.

"She was very fine and very rare and very fond of life—yet I have never met any one who sat as loosely to it as she did . . . and in the end she gave her life away.

"She was so gallant, so ready for adventure, in spite of her shyness and reticence; she was so keenly interested in 'doing things' from lace-making to riding, that, even now, there are moments when it is impossible to believe that she is really dead.

"She had the dearest hands, very long and slender, with the texture of pansies, yet those slim hands must have done many grim things in their time.

"*Way of Healing* is written in memory of her as a doctor. But to me she seemed even more of a scholar by nature. She came of

a long line of scholars, and she mopped up languages as a sponge mops up water. From her childhood she spoke French as easily as she spoke English. She read Latin and taught herself to read Greek. She was for three and a half years with the Scottish Medical Mission at Hebron, Palestine, and a recognised authority on Arabic described her as the best Arabic scholar who had passed through his hands. Hebrew was to have been her next endeavour—there were so many things she meant to do and see and learn.

"Her medical work at Hebron was considered 'fine beyond praise,' but she was recalled at the outbreak of war and worked for a little while in England. In the autumn of 1915 she went as surgeon to the Scottish Women's Hospital at the Abbey of Royaumont, France. The last months of her work there must have been very tired ones, but the real illness at the end was mercifully short, and she died as gallantly as she had lived . . . smiling.

"If only she might have been buried in her own Scotland, or at Royaumont where she was loved so well, but alas! she sleeps at Nice, far away from all who care for her."

From "*Other People's Fires*,"
by ISABEL BUTCHART.

Notices.

The Sixteenth Annual Dinner of the Royaumont Association will be held at the Forum Club, 6, Grosvenor Place, by arrangement with Mrs. McIntosh, on Saturday, 1st December, 1934.

The Annual General Meeting will *not* take place this year owing to the difficulty of getting a room,—but the Committee will meet informally together to discuss matters.

SISTER INKSON.—We regret to announce the death of Sister Inkson which took place last April at Long Island, New York. Sister Inkson was at Royaumont from November, 1915, to May, 1916. She was theatre sister during that time and many Royaumontites will remember how hard-working and efficient she was throughout those terrible months.

New Addresses for Members.

Mrs. Simmonds (Banks), 30, St. John's Road, Putney, London, S.W. 15.
 Mrs. Walford (Cannon), Windmills, Worlington, nr. Bury St. Edmunds.
 Davidson, Grange Cottage, Dornoch.
 Mrs. Lyon (Johnstone), 45, Cleveland Square, London, W. 2.
 Mrs. Clements (Kennedy), 51, Eyre Court, St. John's Wood, London, N.W. 8.
 Murray (Big), 23, St. Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts.
 Mrs. F. Marshall (Sister L. Peters), Gladys Avenue, B.C., Canada.
 Parkinson, Miss D. (New Member), Senge, Ditchling, Sussex.
 Rolt, "Croft," Watermillock, Penrith, Cumberland.

Letters to the Editor.

MRS. SAVILL sends the following interesting account of a visit to Boran:

25th October, 1934.

On the way back from the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth last summer we motored round by Compiègne, Senlis and Royaumont. Senlis used to be the most quiet little village. On this Sunday afternoon in August we arrived in a thick crowd of cars, charabancs and motor cycles. A large fashionable modern hotel has sprung up near the cathedral. We could scarcely find a vacant site to park the car, and could hardly pass through the great throng of people and vehicles to visit the cathedral. Yet in the cathedral itself not more than five visitors could be seen. The crowd was so great that it was impossible to get near the famous street, one side of which was destroyed by the enemy in 1914.

Then we came nearer Royaumont. At St. Leu we were fortunate enough to meet M. Fossard, who showed us over his domain, and sent many messages to Miss Ivens and the other Dames Ecosais. Then Boran—imagine my surprise to find a smart hotel on the village side of the bridge, and opposite it an array of bathing cabins and large yellow sun umbrellas over smart luncheon tables! At Royaumont the Gouins told us that they spent

most of the hot summer days at the smart bathing pool of Boran. Boran we all remember in 1914-1918—the demolished bridge and the primitive ferry, the sorrowful grey village street. By 1932, a smart bathing resort. But though there were new roads and new villas near by, the woods were still as peaceful. How soon a new world springs up which knows nothing of the past—at the Boran smart hotel none of the employés nor the manager or his wife seemed ever to have heard of Les Dames Ecosais.

THE ROBIN writes: "If anyone wishes to spend a happy week in Spring, let him—or her—go to Stratford, and stay at the Avonside Hotel, and go to the Theatre every night. I had always wanted to go to Stratford, and this last Spring I did go with a friend. We arrived on *The Birthday*—there is only one Birthday in Stratford—but from foolish feelings of modesty did not attend the Birthday Luncheon. We thought that was only for celebrities, and we were not celebrities; so we arrived in the afternoon, to find the town full of people walking about with buttonholes of rosemary, tied with black and gold ribbons—Shakespeare's colours—people who were no more celebrities than we were, but who had gone to the Luncheon by the simple expedient of buying tickets. However, we shall know better next time. We saw 'The Tempest,' 'Henry V.,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Much Ado About Nothing,' and 'Twelfth Night.' The Ariel of 'The Tempest,' Rachel Kempson, was also Juliet. She was delightful, and it was a joy to see a really youthful Juliet. We were much interested in the Beatrice of Dorothy Black, as we had seen her last winter in Edinburgh as a very sombre Emily in 'The Brontës.' This versatile lady was also Viola in 'Twelfth Night.' Very charming, but not equal to Jean Forbes-Robertson in the Black and Silver 'Twelfth Night' which I saw in London two or three years ago. The Theatre itself is not beautiful, but its simplicity and massiveness give it a strange dignity. Inside, it is marvellous; there are no pillars, and no glaring lights, but the seats are inclined to shut you up inside them if you move! As a feminist, I was thrilled by the fact that the architect was a woman—the only competitor of all those who sent in plans to include the old part of the

theatre which had escaped the fire in 1930 in the new design. Stratford is the heart of England, and outwardly Shakespeare dominates it. And yet, it did not seem to me that he himself was as much there as St. Francis is in Assisi, or St. Columba in Iona. But I may be wrong, and 'the fault, dear Brutus, may be in ourselves'—anyhow, I advise everyone to go to Stratford, if they have not already been, and to go again if they have."

FROM FAR AND NEAR.

"Little Andy" (Mrs. Longrigg) writes from Palestine she is afraid that she won't be able to come to the Dinner this year.

Sister Colville (Mrs. Silvanus) still lives in Edinburgh but she has not been able to come up for the Dinner for some time.

Little Davidson's new address is on another page, she now lives next door to Mrs. Hacon of Royaumont days, who we are sorry to hear suffers rather from rheumatism.

J. Denny, who was one of the first orderlies to go out to Royaumont and was so ill out there, has gone to India for six months.

"Disorderly" (Miss Gray) was looking wonderfully well and was in good spirits when I saw her in July.—(EDITOR.)

Sister Doig, who is working in Edinburgh, has never been able to come south for a Dinner. We hope she manages to do so some day.

Goss (Mrs. Harper) writes: "My cub Doreen is nearly eleven years old and of course is all that a Royaumont cub should be! I enjoyed reading all the news in the leaflet.

"I seem to be very busy with one thing and another. We have lent our lofts to the unemployed for a Social Centre, and I try and collect up old clothes and distribute them to those in need. Last year we got up a garden party to get funds for them and entertained 300 people for tea in our not very large garden. As I am head-gardener, with the assistance of a man one day a week, it meant some work. I am very interested in the Mothers' Union and go about speaking in the Diocese, as well as running the branch here."

M. Graham (Chauffeur) in a letter to Tollit says: "I just cannot tell you how much I appreciate all the work you people do, in order to keep us together through the NEWS-LETTER, and I do feel a slacker for not writing. However I have never been fortunate enough to be in London for the annual re-union, and have therefore somehow got out of touch with the other members, although I am always extremely interested to hear their news.

"I have often thought I might meet Fulton, for we

have both been staying in Florida at the same time on various occasions.

"The people I am with still travel as much as ever, and as they are quite old they usually seek a warmer climate for the winter."

In a letter to Butler, *The Wee Freee*, Dr. Hendrie writes: "We are (you can look us up in the map) in Kibbi, sixty miles North of Accra, the seat of Sir Ofori, who is at present on a Mission to England. We do not therefore have the opportunity of visiting the boats as they pass through—not that anyone would go through the Accra surf, except for a very dear friend. We therefore do not have the chance of meeting people till we are once more on the way home. It doesn't seem to me that I shall ever be in England at the time of a Dinner. My leave for the next few years will be March, July or August. You mention taking in babies with their nurses. I am afraid that the West Coast person is not wealthy enough to board out both a baby and a nurse. There are hundreds of homes which take babies and themselves provide the nurse at a reasonable fee. School children cost anything up to £250 and clothes—mine costs more—so with two children, the income of the younger official does not exist. If you and your sister wish to take in children, it would be better to take entire charge and have a nurse to help you with so many, but as I said before homes for small children seem to abound, and naturally after school age, children go to boarding school. And most boarding schools can also accommodate them during holiday time. If you really start let me have a prospectus and I will do what I can.

"Yellow fever has broken out in our district again. We have had the medical notice to-day."

Dr. Eleanor Hodson writes: "I am afraid that I quite lost touch with all those agreeable people at Royaumont. Even Collum I haven't seen or heard of for about twelve years, and Morgan I haven't seen since she stayed with me here about the year of the flood. Dr. Hodson's address is Abbot's Barton Hotel, Canterbury, and we are very sorry to hear that for the last eighteen months she has been very ill since having a bad heart attack in 1932. All of us who remember Dr. Hodson send her our sympathy and good wishes for better health.

Sister Milne has been in Africa for several years and is at present nursing in Tanganyika territory.

Dr. Ruth Nicholson is, we hear, very busy but hopes to come up for the Dinner. She had a good holiday in Norway and Sweden.

When last heard of Prance was in Africa going up country with Morgan.

Ramsay sends the following lively account of a tour in Scotland: "I'm very afraid I won't get up for the dinner this year so will you convey my greetings to everyone.

"I have not done anything spectacular this year but I had a very delightful trip to Orkney in June. We motored to Inverness and had a search for the Lochness Monster but were not lucky. We thought we saw it

like a huge eel, but through field glasses it turned out to be a line of ducks making for the shore in single file!!

"Then we went on to Lochinver and right up the coast to Tongue. Then across Scotland once more by Loch Shin to Dornoch where we picked up my Father and went on to Wick. I don't recommend Wick as a place to stay in. It is dull, dismal and DRY!! The rest of our motor trip was lovely—magnificent scenery, quite good roads (if narrow, passing places are arranged) and the hotels are improved out of all knowledge. We left the car at Wick and flew by Highland Airways to Kirkwall in 25 minutes, passing over the Fleet, which was in Scapa Flow at the time. Our friends live on an island an hour and a quarter's run by motor launch from Kirkwall, but it was arranged that we should go on by air and in another seven minutes we landed in front of the house! What a saving of time and trouble. It would have taken us a night by sea to go from Wick to Kirkwall and I should most certainly have been sick. As it was we left Wick at 11.30, and my Father had had lunch, motored seven miles and was fishing on a loch by 2.30. What more could you wish for a keen fisher.

"We flew back to Wick and had the experience of flying blind above a thick white sea fog and nearly had to go on to Inverness as the aerodrome was almost invisible. However, the fog cleared for a few minutes and we got down. We spent another three days coming south by the new Inverness-Glencoe road, a wonderful bit of engineering and most interesting.

"I think we ought to have a Re-union in Edinburgh or Glasgow for the stay-at-home people like myself! who can't get to London for the Dinner. What does anyone think?

"I hope you will get lots of news for the NEWS-LETTER as it is such fun reading about other people's doings."

Sister Rawstone (Mrs. Bruce) writes: "I enjoy reading the Royaumont news and look forward to getting the magazine. I wonder how many people would remember me. I have not seen any of them for years but have specially vivid recollections of Moore, the chauffeur, and one or two others."

Sister Robbie writes: "I have received the note referring to the notice of the Annual Dinner. I shall

never cease to be interested in Royaumont and recall with pleasure the days I spent there and many of the interesting women I met there.

"I hope the Association still continues to keep going."

There was quite a little Scottish Re-union at the **Robin's** this Autumn when **Grandage, Berry** and **Gillies Smith** had tea together, and **Dr. Estcourt-Oswald** was staying with the Robin in September.

Rolt writes: "My new address is—Croft, Watermill-lock, Penrith. I'm very busy now getting my little house altered and done up and hope to be settled in by the end of May, and it will be a great pleasure to see any old Royaumontites who happen to be this way. I believe you come up here sometimes. I had a long letter from Armstrong at Christmas. Things seem to be a bit better with them but none too bright yet."

Smieton (Mrs. Sanderson). All members of the Royaumont Association will be very sorry to hear that Smieton has not been at all well and is only just beginning to be convalescent. We all know how hard she works and what a help she is to us. She says she is coming to the Dinner "come what may," and we hope by that time she will be really better.

Thorne (Mrs. Newton) has gone back to India.

Warner (Mrs. Hodgson) found quite by chance that she and Parkinson had been living within four miles of one another for the last three years. We hope Parkinson will join the Royaumont Association.

E. Webster writes: "I seldom see any Royaumont people nowadays, occasionally Merrylees comes, and at Christmas I hear from one of the Salle Blanche men."

R. Webster (Mrs. Dudley Williams) was in London last spring with her four children. She returned to Australia in October.

P. Williams' (orderly) writes: "I was in Paris just after Easter, and spent a day out at Royaumont. The place was looking marvellous—like a dream, with all the trees just out."

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