

SEPTEMBER }
OCTOBER } 1940

Old Comrades



Association

GAZETTE

GENERAL SECRETARY: Mrs. Johnston, Q.M.A.A.C., O.G.A., 5 Chesham Place, London, S.W.1.

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HEADQUARTERS REPORT FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

A Meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 26th September, at 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1, with Chief Controller Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan in the Chair. Owing to the difficulty of getting home after the Meeting there was only a small attendance; those present being Miss Ireland, Miss Cliff, Senior Leader Bilbrough, Miss Haines, Miss Binks, Miss Billington (the Hon. Treasurer) and the General Secretary, Mrs. Johnston. The following members sent apologies for absence:—Miss Longman, Mrs. Eager, Company Commander Grundy, Mrs. Powell, Miss Saunders, and Miss Kenworthy-Browne.

Miss Edith Thompson, who has gone to South Africa for the duration of the War in connection with the evacuation of children, was much missed at the Meeting.

The General Secretary was instructed to send a message of sympathy from Council to those members at present known to have lost their homes owing to bombing, or who have been obliged to leave on account of bombs which have caused havoc to places where they have been residing, among them, Miss Warrior, Miss Haines, Miss W. Rogers, and Miss Wittering.

It was agreed that information with regard to the proposed Benevolent Organization for the A.T.S. be sent to all members for consideration before the next meeting. The matter is an important one and it is hoped that more members will be present when the question is next on the Agenda for discussion.

The next meeting of Council will be held on Saturday, 14th December, 1940.

The work at the Headquarters office has been lighter than usual as very few benevolent applications have been received. This is most encouraging as it surely means that members are better off in some way, either serving again or working.

Miss D. Allan and Miss F. Mackenzie were welcome visitors, the former returned from Canada some time ago and is serving in the A.T.S.

BENEVOLENT REPORT FOR JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

Four applications only have been received since the date of the last Council Meeting on 17th July.

One case in July for clothing and bedclothing.

One application in August for Spectacles.

Two applications in September of which one was for dentures, the other for assistance to purchase furniture lost in rail transit owing to raids. This case is not completed, only urgency grant made.

Assistance was given in each case.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Year Ending 30th June, 1940.

Once more we come to the end of another financial year in our Club, which has proved most eventful in world

affairs. Twelve months ago we little thought war would have brought such startling changes, perhaps because of these our Club has kept up its numbers wonderfully well. Immediately upon the outbreak of war each Member filled up a form offering to serve her country in case of need, and these were lodged at the Town Hall.

On the 12th November we attended the Annual Armistice Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, quite a number of our Members being present.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Victoria Palace on the 7th December, the only guests being Major-General and Mrs. Coxen, apologies being received from Sir Thomas and Lady Blamey and Bishop Booth. A very enjoyable time was spent, and we were happy to have our Vice President, Mrs. Britomarte James, back with us after her eventful trip from England. We were all most interested to hear of her experiences. Afterwards General Coxen gave one of his entertaining speeches, and the evening concluded with a musical programme.

Anzac Day, 25th April, was observed as in previous years. A Poppy Wreath was placed in the Inner Shrine by Miss Foster at 10.12 a.m., after which we assembled at the Nurse Cavell Memorial for the Service in honour of that brave nurse. Dr. Osborne placed a wreath on our behalf and an inspiring address was given by General Sir Julius Bruche. In the afternoon there was a good muster of members at the Shrine of Remembrance, thirty-one being present, some having marched. Of course, there were fewer ex-service men present, but we all felt very sad that once more our Empire had been forced into another war as we had all thought 1918 had seen the end of wars.

Our February Meeting was of exceptional interest as Sir Thomas and Lady Blamey paid us a short visit. We were indeed honoured to have the head of the Australian Forces with us, and his interesting remarks were very much appreciated.

On the 13th June, a Card Evening was held at the home of Mrs. Wildy. A very happy time was spent, and the result was £2 10s. was handed to the Comforts Fund. We thank this member very much for her hospitality.

It is with very much regret we record the passing on of two of our members, Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Marsham, both having suffered many weary days of illness.

We are pleased to welcome back to the Club Miss P. Harvey, who since we last saw her has lived in India and England.

G. M. SMITH.

PARCELS

Two excellent parcels have been received from London Branch through Miss Sanderson. There have been no applications from members needing clothing during the past two months but it is certain that they will roll in as soon as the weather gets colder and we thank Miss Sanderson for keeping the needs of the Cupboard in mind, her knitted vests are a real joy and will be a wonderful comfort.

We have also to thank Miss E. M. Winter (Leytonstone) for a very useful parcel.

BRANCH REPORTS

London.

There was a very enthusiastic gathering at the Club on the 20th June, to see the Canadian sound films so kindly arranged by the Canadian Government Exhibition and Publicity, our grateful thanks are due to Mr. L. R. Avery, the director.

After the show, old comrades demonstrated in a practical manner by contributing £1 towards the Comforts Fund, and Miss L. Saunders who is in charge of the wool, etc., on hearing that the operator was being "called to the Colours," promised to send him a pair of the Branch's best hand knitted socks.

Re-unions are still being well attended and will continue by general request.

Our first parcel has been dispatched to the 10th Middlesex Regiment, and a letter of thanks has been received from Major E. Mayhew, M.C., as follows:

"Thank you very much indeed for the most useful parcel of comforts for this Battalion. Would you be good enough to convey to your committee and members my appreciation, on behalf of this regiment, of their help and good wishes."

For those who have not yet had an opportunity of helping, the following articles are still badly needed:

Socks, books, old tennis balls, cricket bats, dart boards, etc.

Miss L. Saunders has sent a special report, which you will find somewhere in the Gazette and she will be very pleased to receive any of the above mentioned goods.

B. HAINES.

Bradford

Now that the long dark evenings are here, many of our members are unable to make the journey to the Club. Only two faithful ones turned up for the August meeting, but ten arrived for the September one. It was decided to abandon the idea of meeting at the Club in town, until the lighter evenings came back, and so Mrs. Goodman (our Secretary), kindly offered her home, and we are to make it our Winter Head-Quarters. We can meet in the afternoon, or early evening, which will be much better. We are sending a guinea to our Bradford "Spitfire Fund." We often wonder about all our 'old comrades' in London, during this time of great distress, and we wish you well.

EMILIE WARD

Manchester

The activities have not been quite so well attended as one hoped they would be; for instance, on May 6th only a third of the members arrived who promised to support Mrs. Bishop our Chairman at the meeting of the O.C.A. who were invited to attend the A. M. Pioneer Corps, M/E Company's lecture at the Free Trade Hall; subject—"The Germany We Face," given by Major Victor Haddick F.R.G.S. There is also a great falling off in the attendance of our Members, they are joining other organisations where their matured experience is still of inestimable value, so that there is less time for the luxury of social evenings.

Those who do still attend, bring knitting, those who don't knit keep the ball rolling on the conversational side, some do both—dropping bricks, or should it be stitches?

Edinburgh

I have been laid aside for some considerable time owing to a serious operation and have not been able to send any news of the Edinburgh Club. I am much stronger now and hope to return to my cottage at Gifford next week but alas, am forbidden to do any Communal Kitchen or Canteen work. Owing to the temporary closing of the Edinburgh Club our members are scattered and news is scanty. We hope to re-open shortly as a recreational canteen centre for the present service women, such a place is badly needed for them, but nothing is settled yet.

I enclose a cutting from the "Scotsman" about the death of the late Dr. Agnes Cowan, which you may be able to find room for in the Gazette. Her sister, Mrs. Hislop was our energetic O.C.A. secretary before her marriage. Our present secretary, Miss Lush, is helping in a hotel in the wilds of Glencoe and liking it.

Victoria

I am writing in the hope that this reaches you safely, to let you know that we are all thinking of you and admiring the way England is facing the threat of invasion. Times are very anxious, but I am sure there can be but one outcome, and once more the peoples will live in happiness again.

I am enclosing our Annual Report, from which you will see we are "all keeping together," also a cutting from a newspaper showing we do make a little effort to help the women who serve, and this amount will be augmented by a Card Party we are holding this week. Not so bad for our little Club.

I am sure you all realise we over here are making a big effort to help apart from man power.

In case you desire to call on us in the near future, our Office Bearers this year are:— Miss L. Foster O.B.E., President, and Doctor Ethel Osborne and Mrs. Britomarte James, Vice-Presidents.

Goodbye to the present, with kindest regards to you all.
G. M. SMITH, Hon. Secretary.

NEWS OF OLD COMRADES

We are so glad to know that our old Rouen friend May Norval, has arrived safely from France. She sent the writer a letter telling her of some of her experiences, and how she had been hurriedly evacuated from Wimereux (by a hospital ship from Boulogne) on 21st May, only just in time before the invaders arrived. She had just ten minutes in which to pack a bag, so her home and all her possessions were lost. We do most affectionately sympathise with her. Her anxiety was all the more keen because she had a married sister with her husband and five little children living at Ypres who, of course, were forced to evacuate before France was invaded, and they too had a most miraculous escape. A kind Belgian motor coach proprietor who was fleeing from Liege and had his entire family in the coach, took pity on them and packed the whole family of seven into his coach, the latter being very thoroughly camouflaged with tremendous tree branches, and as one of the children had a broken leg in plaster, they were more than grateful. This little family had a very trying time as they had already travelled from Ypres to Wimereux, via Calais, the journey taking several days, before they could get to Boulogne, and air raids were their common lot at all the many places they passed.

They now are all safe, and though they have lost their home and all their possessions, they are thankful because so many other poor people could not escape.

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News has come to Headquarters of many ex-members of Q.M.A.A.C. who are now serving with the Auxiliary Territorial Service, among them Company Commander G. H. P. Macfarlane (40th Durham Company), Volunteer Lane, Volunteer M. Brown, Section Leader Turner, Volunteer N. P. Mulligan (at one time secretary at Blackpool), Volunteer Bailey, who is now anxious to join the O.C.A., and Company Commander D. Allan, who is at Caterham.

Mrs. Gervers who was a Controller in the Corps was a welcome visitor to Headquarters in May, as was also Miss B. M. Hassell. The General Secretary was delighted to see them both, she had not had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Gervers before and was glad to have the opportunity of enrolling her as a member of the O.C.A. Miss Hettie Cripps came on to Headquarters, after visiting Dame Florence, and has also joined the O.C.A. The War has recalled to the minds of many of our members the days of their service with the Corps and they are all anxious to serve again. It is a real pleasure to the General Secretary when Old Comrades can find time to visit Headquarters, though she is afraid that the stairs are not a pleasure to the visitors! Still they are not nearly so trying as the stairs at 29 Cromwell Road. Miss Alice Anderson, of Le Touquet, is now back in England after many adventures on the journey and difficulty in getting away from France.

Mrs. Johnston had the pleasure, while on her holiday, of having tea with Miss Dorothy Stone, Forewoman

Signaller at Camp 1, Etaples and later at Paris Plage. Stone is still very busy working and is now Travelling Supervisor for the Telephone Service in Worcester. As usual there was much reminiscing about the good old days and Mrs. Johnston greatly enjoyed looking through Stone's album of photographs of war days in France.

Miss H. M. Billington has been enjoying an unexpected holiday, the Club at which she works had to be evacuated as a large delayed action bomb was planted in the Square, in addition to numerous smaller ones. This gave her an opportunity of coming to Chesham Place and she and the General Secretary had the pleasure of sorting a Cupboard, they really did "go to it" and added a good pile of paper to the Salvage campaign!

CORRESPONDENCE

From Mrs. Daisy Buckingham, 9709-111 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

It is nice to get the old Gazette and see what is going on, but I expect it is all very difficult. We are trying to keep our little club going and do some little bit, but we are all pretty busy people. We had an appeal from Hastings, England, in our paper some time ago for funds to help entertain Canadian troops over there, so at our last meeting we passed a motion to send them an M.O. to the value of £1 so as to try and help a little.

Two months ago we had a card party here at my house to raise a little money, and we had six tables in play, so there was quite a crowd. Last Saturday we had a social evening, but owing to illness and the weather, we did not have so many out. We played Bingo and had a bit of a sing-song.

By the way, Calgary is 200 miles from here, and in the last Gazette they put that our Edmonton Club passed a resolution in Calgary, etc., etc. The military headquarters are there, and we forwarded our resolution to them, so I suppose that is how the mistake arose. They also put my maiden name as Towser instead of Townner, as I daresay you noticed. Cannot say I was flattered, more flattened in fact.

We listen daily with great anxiety to the war news. We get very good broadcasts direct from London.

I hope you are keeping fit and able to carry on with the good work.

Vol. A. Holdway, 803 (Toogood 38529, W.A.A.C.), 44th Coy. A.T.S., Albany Barracks, Parkhurst, I.O.W.

Some one very kindly sent to me a copy of the Gazette which was forwarded on to me from an old address. I gathered from reading it, news would be welcome from Q.M.A.A.C.s who have joined the A.T.S. I will give as short a version as possible. I joined W.A.A.C. in the last year of the last war, and was demobilised one year after the war. During that time I was stationed at Clifton Hotel, Bristol, Connaught Club, London, Bostal Heath Hutments, Woolwich, and with Signals, Fenny Stratford and Bedford. My name then was Toogood. After being demobbed I did six years in the service of the Metropolitan Asylums Board as consumptive and mental nurse. I left there and married an Old Contemptible, who was through Mons at the age of 17. I lost my husband three years ago. I joined the service of the P.D.S.A. as a lethalist. I joined the A.T.S. on October 10th, 1938, and was called up on the outbreak of war and attached to R.E. at Portsmouth. I passed two clerical tests with them and was posted to Albany Barracks, Parkhurst, as company office clerk. While at Portsmouth I was billeted at Hilsea College, near the R.A.O.C. Barracks. There are two cooks here at the Barracks, A.T.S., who were in Q.M.A.A.C.—Johnson, who was stationed at Folkestone, and Morris, who was stationed at Catterick, Yorkshire.

Greetings to all Old Comrades.

VICTORIA

No doubt you will have read in the Press of the new women's unit being formed in Australia to be known as the W.A.N.S., meaning Women's Australian National Service. However, it is all voluntary, so very few of our

members have joined. We help in other ways, and it is really wonderful how the members work together these troublesome times.

The May re-union was a very successful musical evening, and what a roll-up. In June we played whist, each player paying 1s., which goes to the wool fund. So far this year we have not drawn on club funds for wool.

Last month we had an American evening, or, as we call it, "put and take." Each member must bring something and also buy something; that netted over 30s. for wool. At the committee meeting last month it was decided to convert £20 of the Club funds into War Savings certificates.

How these busy days fly. We will soon be thinking of the dinner, but this year we are not having any guests—just members and their ex-Service friends, owing to war conditions.

The air raids on England are a source of worry to us out here. We seem to be far away and news is scarce, but we can only hope our folks are safe and sound.

My husband is in camp with the A.I.F., but to date there is no talk of them leaving Australia. I see him every week-end, but that is only till the end of August, when they move further away. My husband is hoping his unit will be sent to England; we have quite a few friends in the A.I.F. already there.

Still no rain in this country, and if we have none before summer I can see everyone going to the sea for a bath. The water shortage is quite a worry to the Water Board and to the farmers.

I often try to picture England as it is now and as I know it—no comparison, I guess.

Best wishes to all old comrades from Club members here.

ETHEL MILES.

MISS EDITH THOMPSON'S APPOINTMENT

The General Secretary has just received a letter from Miss Edith Thompson, written at sea September 1st. She writes as follows:—

I am afraid that the O.C.A. will have an absentee vice-chairman for some time to come; it looks as though I shall be serving overseas for the duration. No soldier could have received marching orders more suddenly than I did. I was told at 4.30 p.m. one day to catch the 8.30 a.m. train the next, so I had no time to make any arrangement or buy any clothes. I am now in mid-ocean, but where I have no idea. The ship is laden with a priceless cargo; nothing but children and those in charge of them. I have no duties while we are at sea and am enjoying a good rest and the fun of watching the children. I have been appointed representative of the Children's Overseas Reception Board in South Africa, and shall be attached to the office of the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in Pretoria, though I shall probably be travelling most of the time. Will you please just mention my appointment in the Gazette and explain how very hurried my departure was. I could not even say good-bye to my own family, and am very worried that I could not settle about London Branch. I did go to the Club the night I left, as I hoped it was re-union night, but, alas! it was not. Please ask Warrior to send me the Gazette, and any letters will be very welcome. I need not say how much I hate leaving home and friends at a juncture like this, but when asked to undertake such a job, there is really no choice.

FROM THE MIDLANDS

The members of the E. Midland United Services Club offer our comrades in London and all other cities which have had such ruthless visitations from the enemy our constant thoughts, and know that they will be blest with the old spirit of determination to carry on in spite of such appalling conditions, and that they be given a safe passage.

We have recently had our first anniversary in the new clubroom, and the members contributed to such a sumptuous tea that it was difficult to believe rationing was in force. One member has very cleverly upholstered some chairs, and we have had a very handsome gift of two

settees with covers. These settees were sent by the manager of a well-known Nottingham hotel. They are most comfortable and help to make the room even more cosy than ever.

An extraordinary general meeting has been held to discuss the question of the admission of the A.T.S. and other women now serving. It was unanimously felt that the matter be deferred until the women had completed a longer period of service.

N. OSLER, Sec., Q.M.A.A.C. Section.

IN MEMORIAM

From "The Times," August 14th, 1940.

SENN. On August 12th, 1940, suddenly, MONICA SENN, M.B.E., of 58 Greville Hall, N.W.6., widow of C. Hermann Senn, O.B.E., and beloved sister of Audrey Harcourt-Brown. Cremation at Golders Green, Friday, August 16th, at 11.30.

It is with great sadness of heart that we have to report the passing of Mrs. C. Hermann Senn (née M. Harcourt-Browne), of Rouen and London Branch, who passed on suddenly on Monday, August 12th. It came as a great shock to those of us who knew her so well for her illness of a fortnight had taken a turn for the better and we were hoping she would recover. But it was not to be, and our hearts go out in sympathy to her sister, Miss Audrey Harcourt-Brown, in her sad bereavement. The two sisters were so much to each other.

Harcourt-Browne was one of the first administrators to go to Rouen, in May, 1917, and in fact she accompanied the first draft there. Many of us remember vividly that first journey to France with her, and from the beginning she was one of our most popular officers, for she was thoughtful for the comfort of the women under her, and always commanded our respect and esteem. Rue le Notre billet was very happy under her administration, as also was Cauchoise for the short time she was with us. She was also our drill instructor in Rouen.

After her marriage we gained another friend in her husband, Mr. Senn, and both Rouenites in London, and London Branch members, received many kindnesses at his hands. It was through Mr. Senn's kind instrumentality and influence that several parties of London Branch were allowed to visit the Royal Kitchens in Buckingham Palace.

"Harcourt" as we Rouenites affectionately called her, was the soul of generosity and always ready to help any old comrades. And too, she was generous to her Rouen girls. The writer remembers well her remark in May, 1927, when she said—"Do you remember the date, it is just ten years since we first went to Rouen—we must celebrate." And she and her husband vied with each other as to the treat we should have which resulted in a dinner and theatre for six of the Rouen girls in London, and we had a most happy evening with them both. Again, in May, 1937—twenty years after—she said she would like us to celebrate the occasion. Harcourt was then a widow, but a party of twelve, including her sister and herself, had a happy little dinner at the Club and then to a theatre afterwards. What a delightful evening that was, especially to some of our members who had few such pleasures in life, and we did appreciate her kind and generous action. She certainly followed out the Scriptural text that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

We shall miss her sorely at all our WAAC Re-unions and Annual Dinners—if we are able to participate in the latter after the war. It is another link with the past broken. We in Rouen were indeed blessed in having for so many years the friendship of two such dear women as Mary Laird and Monica Harcourt-Browne; and though they have now gone from our sight, we pay tribute to their memory and give thanks for the friendship of both of them.

E. M. WINTER.

THE LATE DR. AGNES M. COWEN

Dr. Agnes Marshall Cowan, whose death occurred at Cambridge was a woman of notable gifts. She was house physician at Leith Hospital and non-resident house surgeon at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Dr. Cowan

offered for missionary service in 1907, going out on the honorary basis, and for more than thirty years served without cost to the Church.

Her first post was in a lonely old Manchu town not far from Harbin, in a district where bandits rode through the country and at intervals harried both towns and villages, and where the temperature fell to seventy degrees of frost in winter. After several years service at Ashiho, she returned to this country during the last war, and served as assistant medical officer at H.M. Factory, Gt. Britain, and was medical officer to Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (attached to the R.A.M.C.) at Brockton and Rugeley camps.

On returning to China, she was appointed to the Women's Hospital in Moukden where her special work was midwifery, a subject in which she also lectured to the students of Moukden Medical Hospital. From this she came home invalided only a few weeks ago.

THE LATE MRS. F. H. NOBLES

On June 4th in the Perth Public Hospital the death occurred of Florence Hellen, beloved wife of John E. Nobles and mother of Marion and Fred, and her departure from this life was a sad loss to a wide circle of friends in Naremburn and in the metropolitan area.

Born in England 46 years ago the late Mrs. Nobles came to Naremburn in 1921 and has resided in the district ever since and in that time she endeared herself to all who came to know her.

During 1917-18 she was a member of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in France and later in her capacity as President and also Secretary of the Naremburn branch of the Women's Auxiliary R.S.L., she did a great deal of work on behalf of returned soldiers. Also she was a willing helper at many other functions promoted for the public benefit and in every way was a very fine citizen.

The chief mourners were John E. Nobles (husband), Fred and Marion (children), Mrs. Hilton and Miss A. Hitchcock (sisters), Mrs. H. Nobles (mother-in-law), George and Joshua (brothers-in-law), Mr. R. Hilton (brother-in-law), Misses Hazel, Betty, Joan and Margaret Hilton (nieces).

The funeral took place in the Baptist portion of the Karrakatta Cemetery on June 6th, the officiating minister being the Rev. Harry Reeve of the Central Baptist Church.

The coffin was covered by the Union Jack and many beautiful floral tributes.

Mrs. Nobles served as F/W Hitchcock, at Hastings, Folkestone, and with the A.E.F. in France from 1917 to 1920.

KEEN INTEREST IN Y.W.C.A.

Officially recognised as the only women's organisation for work with the fighting forces in Britain, the Young Women's Christian Association has more than forty-five centres in operation in Great Britain alone.

These centres vary from large huts in camps to club-houses near women's billets, from centres serving hundreds of business girls in the city to small centres in outposts of the country, where lonely women are carrying on war work.

The British Y.W.C.A. has appealed to Australia for £5,000 to increase its work among women war workers and men of the services, and Victoria aims at raising £3,000. Already the first £1,000 is in sight.

Yesterday Miss Lilian Foster, president, Imperial Ex-Service Women's Association, handed in a cheque for £14 5s., the result of a collection made at a small meeting of the association.

Members of the association who contributed out of gratitude to the British Y.W.C.A. for what it did for them during the last war included a munition worker, a W.R.A.F. (Women's Royal Air Force Auxiliary), a Q.M.A.A.C. (Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps), a W.R.N.S. (Women's Royal Naval Service), a member of the Women's Legion, and a "Fany" (Field Army Nursing Yeomanry Service). Miss Foster herself was a V.A.D. herself was a V.A.D. commandant.

The Editor of the "Argus" has acknowledged £873 16s.