

JANUARY-
FEBRUARY } 1942

Old Comrades



Association

GAZETTE

GENERAL SECRETARY: Mrs. Johnston, Q.M.A.A.C., O.C.A., 82, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

All contributions for the Gazette should reach the Editor, Q.M.A.A.C., O.C.A. Gazette, 82 Lancaster Gate, London, W.2. **not later than the 21st of the following months:- January, March, May, July, September and November.**

A GREETING FOR THE NEW YEAR FROM HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL

(Controller Commandant A.T.S., and The Honourary President of the Old Comrades Association).

"I send good wishes for 1942 to all Members of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps Old Comrades Association, some of whom I saw in France in 1918.

Wherever they may be now, I have no doubt that they are maintaining their high traditions, and serving their country in many capacities to the utmost of their strength.

Their thoughts, and mine, are with their successors in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, whose pride it is to follow in the same spirit the path of duty and high endeavour to-day.—MARY."

HEADQUARTERS REPORT FOR DECEMBER, 1941 AND JANUARY, 1942.

A Meeting of Council was held on Saturday, 20th December when nine members met under the Chairmanship of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan. The Meeting was a most interesting one. The General Secretary had the pleasure of announcing that Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal had graciously consented to become the Hon. President of the Old Comrades Association. The letter from the lady-in-waiting read as follows:—"The Princess Royal desires me to write to you in reply to your letter and to say that it gives Her Royal Highness great pleasure to accept the invitation of your Council that she should become the Honorary President of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps Old Comrades Association." She reported also that Chief Controller Knox, D.A.T.S., had accepted with pleasure the office of Vice-President of the Association.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting was discussed and it should be full of interest to all members, especially those who can attend the Meeting on the 28th February. It is hoped that as many as possible will be present as questions of the title of the O.C.A. and the increase of Life membership subscriptions are of great importance.

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Batty, Miss Haines, Miss Turner, and Junior Commander Grundy. Miss Cliff and Miss Kenworthy-Browne also wrote regretting being unable to attend but unfortunately their letters did not arrive until after the Meeting.

It was agreed not to arrange a Meeting until after the Annual General Meeting unless unforeseen circumstances arose.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at the Ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1., on Saturday, 28th February, 1942, at 3 p.m.

The Agenda has been printed and posted to Branch Secretaries and members of the O.C.A.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend the Meeting in order that the Meeting may be representative of all Branches.

BRANCH SECRETARIES' MEETING

The Meeting of Branch Secretaries will be held at 2 p.m. at the Ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1. This Meeting will be held in the Lecture Room upstairs, as usual.

RE-UNION TEA

A Re-union Tea will be held immediately after the Annual General Meeting, on Saturday, 28th February, 1942. Tickets, price 1s. 6d. each, can be obtained from the General Secretary, Q.M.A.A.C., O.C.A., 82, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2. A stamped addressed envelope, with 1d. stamp, should be forwarded with the application.

VISITORS TO THE OFFICE

The following have been welcome visitors to the office, Miss Blanche Armitage who called on the 27th November, Jean Thorp, now a Corporal in the A.T.S. who came to lunch on the 10th December, Mrs. Fillis on the 15th and Mrs. King on the 30th. It was a great pleasure to see them as we do not get many opportunities of meeting at the present time.

CHRISTMAS AT THE H.Q. OFFICE

The General Secretary has been the happy recipient of many charming remembrances for Christmas and the New Year from Old Comrades in all parts of the world. She realizes that these are sent to her as representing the Old Comrades Association and thanks all the kind senders on behalf of herself and all Old Comrades. It is very delightful and pleasant to feel how close a bond there is between us all, in whatever part of the world we are living. In these uncertain days this friendliness and good comradeship is a very sure and certain reality. Our greetings and remembrances have come from our President Dame Florence Simpson, Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan who has presented the office with a signed photograph of herself as D.A.T.S. We are proud to have a picture in uniform of the first Chief Controller of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and it is hoped that many Old Comrades will come in and see it and have lunch, incidentally, with the General Secretary when they have time and opportunity. Now on to further greetings, from Canada Miss M. V. Burnham, well-known to the Committee of the Service Women's Benevolent Fund, sent a charming card, from Mrs. Kilgour Roberts and Lily Ford came remembrances from Australia and others have come from Leeds Branch, Oxford Branch, Miss E. A. Parkinson, Margaret Moyes, Junior Commander Hilda Pink, Subaltern Bilbrough, Nottingham Club, Brighton Branch, Norfolk Branch, Katharine Simons, Frances Sampson, Dorothy Hoad, H. M. Billington, Mrs. Clough of Newcastle, Staffs and Mr. and Mrs. Peters. Our thanks and best wishes for 1942 go to all these kind friends and to all our other Old Comrades now separated from us.

BRANCH REPORTS

Eire Branch

Remembrance Day was celebrated in Dublin and again thousands of men and women gathered round the Irish National War Memorial at Islandbridge. This Memorial Park was used, for the first time, last November. It is really beautiful, although simple in design, and most impressive. The ceremony began with the playing of Chopin's Funeral March played by the British Legion Band. Then bugles sounded the "Last Post" and the Two Minutes Silence was observed. After the "Reveille" the wreaths were laid on the Memorial, and finally the march-past of ex-Servicemen. A wreath was laid on behalf of our Eire Branch O.C.A. This year the wreath was bought out of funds—but I must thank those members who sent subscriptions too. We hoped to have a meeting when the Hon Sec. was in Dublin in October but a bus strike upset arrangements. Let us hope next time will be luckier and we can have a gathering. There is just a little news of some of our members. Miss Montgomery (Trinity College) supervised and organised all catering arrangements for the Orthopaedic Hospital when it was moved out of town to new quarters all in one day. Her energy and efficient help no doubt aided this achievement. Now Miss Montgomery and her staff are cooking meals, in addition to their usual work, for a "Goodwill" Restaurant started in Dublin to help the poor in these difficult days. Miss Eva Finny says that she is working altogether with the "Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association" (Dublin) and is kept exceedingly busy. Mrs. Simons is doing good work with the W.V.S. in London. Mrs. McCutcheon has an only son serving in the R.A.F. and at the moment out in Canada. Mrs. Molloy says that as she is not free to go to England she has done First Aid, etc., with the Red Cross (Ballinasloe) and mentions that she is glad that the A.T.S. are joining our O.C.A. "as it will make a bigger family" and wishes it (the O.C.A.) success. Eire Branch is up to strength. Many thanks to all members for their subscriptions. Good wishes to all for 1942—Old Members and New from Eire Branch.

ANN O'MEARA.

Nottingham

Errata

We regret an error was made in the last issue of the Gazette, where our president's name was printed as Mrs. Clough.

This year our Christmas Party was held in the New Year as it was thought this would suit the members better. Owing to various calls of duty, our numbers were not so large as last year, but those of us who attended thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The tea table looked like anything but a war-time occasion, and it would probably be as well not to enquire too much how various people managed to get hold of the stuff that cheers and makes one jolly, and it was well utilised in a series of toasts. After the King and members of the Royal Family had been duly honoured, we went down the list in great form, and Dame Helen, the General Secretary, our President, all received their meed from various members, whilst we did not forget our gallant Forces, the Women's Services and absent friends, also that peculiar institution known as the British Empire upon which we truly hoped the sun would never set. Then we had a Treasure-Hunt for which everyone by this time was in good form and it was great fun to see several people on their knees at once unravelling string in dark corners and muttering untold things under their breath. Eventually everyone ran their quarry to earth and breathless but very happy became their usual cheery selves. The fact that we had just heard that one of our members is shortly getting married added to the cheeriness of the evening, and if good wishes will help her along the road then her future is assured.

I had to gather the foregoing news of the early activities of the Party from our own enthusiastic chairman and I was unable to be present until quite late in the evening and unfortunately missed seeing some of our members. Those who remained were in high spirits, and gave me a very warm welcome. They insisted I should pick "a lucky number" and win my prize, as I missed the Treasure Hunt, and I had to sample the "Good Cheer." I feel the next few lines should be whispered, as all my reports tell of the good spreads we have—yet I do not think we in Nottingham eat or drink more than our own comrades in other counties—or do we? We had another meal; this time accompanied with tea. By the way, we have a very charming old teapot, which looks as though it has had a special niche in Nottingham Castle at some obscure date—it is admired by everybody, so whenever you old comrades wander into Nottingham you may be sure of a refreshing cup of tea from our wonderful teapot.

Next week-end 24th inst. we meet again to welcome our bride, Miss Swinescoe, and personally give her our good wishes.

We are very pleased to welcome another new member, Miss Gott (Signals, Abbeville and Rouen) who has been transferred temporarily to Nottingham.

We would like to hear news of Baines and Balme, whom we believe are living in neighbouring Counties.

Occasionally I see Alice Eddowes (Signals, Le Havre) who lives in the County of Nottingham. Unfortunately she is unable to visit our Club Headquarters owing to her delicate state of health and home ties.

We again extend a hearty welcome to all our Old Comrades. Club address: 14, Heathcote Street, Nottingham.

For the Winter I am staying with a friend, and my temporary address is 153, Sherwood Street.

N. OSLER.

North Staffs Branch Report

I am afraid there is nothing to report from the N. Staffs Branch this month. I am afraid that nobody from here will be able to come to the Annual General meeting, but I hope to get the opinions of the Branch on the various items on the Agenda. Subscriptions are beginning to come in and it is hoped that they will all be paid up before long.

Greetings for the New Year to all Old Comrades from the members of the N. Staffs Branch.

H. CLOUGH.

Edinburgh and East of Sootland Branch Q.M.A.A.C. Old Comrades' Association. Annual Report for Year ended 31st October, 1941.

The Committee beg to submit the following Report for the year ended 31st October, 1941. The following is the present Committee: President: Miss Alice Low, O.B.E.; Chairman: Miss M. A. Finlay, M.B.E.; Benevolent Fund Secretary: Miss I. Anderson; Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. G. D. Hardy; Committee Member: Misses Abbey, Bayter Cowie, Fairley, Innes, Ferguson, Molyneaux, Roberts, Mrs. Beaton, Mrs. Hogg, Mrs. Hutchings.

The Membership of the Branch now stands at 45 Annual and 27 Life Members.

We regret to record the death of Mrs. N. Malcolm in July. A letter of sympathy was sent, on behalf of the Branch, by the Secretary to Mr. Malsolm.

No wreath was laid on the Stone of Remembrance this year in the absence of any Service there on Armistice Day. The Festival of Remembrance was not held by the British Legion at the Usher Hall this year.

The Committee is pleased to welcome a new member, Miss Philp, who has joined up again for service in the A.T.S. and is stationed in Edinburgh.

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held at 12, Drumsheugh Gardens on January 11th, 1941. The Meeting was followed by a Reunion of Ex-Service women presided over by Miss M. A. Finlay, M.B.E.

The Branch has been less active this year than in recent years, owing to war conditions, and only two meetings have been arranged. Our President met the members at the Club on 19th July, and on August 21st Miss Lila Davy, who represents our Branch on the Council, visited the Club and gave us some of her experiences in the London raids.

The Monthly Meetings of the O.C.A. have recommenced and are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 7 to 10 p.m. in a small drawing room.

Benevolent Fund.—The Secretary of the Benevolent Fund has received no applications for assistance during the year, but is pleased to report a donation to the Fund from one of our members, Mrs. Riach.

News of Old Comrades.—We learn that Miss Florence Lush is now with the V.A.D., and Miss Catherine Crombie is with the W.A.A.F.

Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription of 2s. 6d. is due in January and that it would assist both the Treasurer and Headquarters in London if subscriptions were sent in early in the New Year.

The Committee take this opportunity of wishing all members peace and prosperity in 1942.

Edinburgh

The O.C.A. had a very happy re-union this month presided over by Miss Finlay. Although our numbers were small, it was wonderful so many came considering a very stormy day and war-time conditions. Our Secretary, Mrs. Hardy, had not much to report naturally, but it was agreed to send our usual subscription to the Home for Disabled Men at Musselburgh and the Poppy Factory. We cannot entertain the men nowadays, worse luck. There had been no calls on our Benevolent Fund, but many of her friends will regret to learn that Miss Davidson (Davie) had been in the Royal Infirmary once more. Mrs. Beaton had visited her and reported her better and home again.

Miss Innes read a message of greeting from Miss Gow, who was none the worse for her visit to Edinburgh in July, also she had news of Cowan (Mrs. Hislop), and Lush still at Kellin as a V.A.D. in a hospital for Poles.

The Club is proving so popular as a Canteen for present service women that an extra house has been taken over in Lyndoch Place, principally for officers. It only remains to add that we had a delightful tea, catered for us by the ladies of the Y.W.C.A. to which we all did full justice. Our Office Bearers and Committee remain the same as there was no nominations and we hope Miss Davy will continue as our London representative.

ISOBEL H. ANDERSON.

Oxford Branch

Oxford Branch had its General Meeting on January 1st with Mrs. Payne in the chair and 26 members present. The following were elected to the committee:—Mrs. Annis, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Munt, Miss Holland. Mrs. Payne re-elected Hon. Treasurer and Jackman as Hon. Secretary.

Mrs. Grundy is Branch representative on Council, an office she has filled now for so many years. The Branch sent her a Christmas Greeting but it was returned marked "gone away" but Jackman hopes to see Mrs. Grundy and many other friends at the O.C.A. reunion in February. The Christmas Party was put back a week and held on New Year's Day when a party of 28 attended a matinee of "Alladin" at New Theatre, Oxford. This pantomime has broken all records here and is voted by all who have seen it to be the best yet. The costumes were amazing for war-time and scenery superb. The dancing also was first class. Tea followed at the Service Club and my most grateful thanks are here extended to Mrs. Perkins for all the help she gave to make it a success, also to Mrs. Annis for the good things she provided. Without friends like these we could not have parties (with pre-war eats as someone remarked). The "special funds" box which Jackman keeps was enriched to the tune of 6s., the proceeds from raffle of pot of heather given by Mrs. Annis. A suggestion that we have another matinee and tea party end of March or early April was adopted and all members present voted for more meetings during summer.

We were pleased to welcome as guests one W.R.N.S., two W.R.A.F.'s and last but not least Sgt. Willett, A.T.S., we hope to see more of them also of Mrs. Perkins' sister, Mollie, another guest, who was there in place of an ex-W.R.A.F. sister who was unavoidably delayed.

Subscriptions of membership are up in this Branch which is most gratifying.

Sgt. Rendall, A.T.S. (late of Shanghai) is at present on a course of instruction at Aldermaston—we look forward to seeing her soon.

News of Scrutton from Cape Town show her to be busy as ever with entertaining the services and doing voluntary work with her car besides managing to knit up lbs. of wool. "Mac," of Rouen, now Mrs. Simpson, of Montreal, writes very indignantly of being told she was "too old" for the Canadian Women's Force. She is sure she could still be a good hostel forewoman!

Here's good wishes for 1942 to all Old Comrades.

Hon. Sec.

Brighton Branch

We are still carrying on the good work. Our secretary (Mrs. Jolly) invited us to her home on November 26th for tea and a chat, and a very nice time we had, despite appalling weather. Several members arrived, two coming all the way from Worthing, one being in uniform of the Women's Land Army. We are all very busy doing something to help the war effort. I, for one, often wish I could be in several places at once, as there is such a lot to be done. I thought the last Gazette a very interesting number. The letters from overseas always thrill me and I always look forward to receiving the Gazette. It is nice to know we have so many members all over the world. I hope Miss Thompson is keeping safe and well, also all other members. As one thinks back, it is wonderful what has been achieved by the people in our Colonies and on this little island fortress of ours. Our Navy and Merchant Service are marvellous people. We cannot thank them enough for bringing our food and etceteras across the oceans and enduring the hardships they do in the many ways of service. Let's hope 1942 will bring us peace. All good wishes for the New Year to members everywhere.

O. AUSTIN (Bonny).

Glasgow and W. of Scotland Branch

This Branch wish all Old Comrades at home and abroad a peaceful and happy New Year.

There are very few meetings now as members are too busy to gather at the Club for recreation. The work they are doing, voluntary or otherwise, is very varied.

Miss Crombie, who was a member of this Branch and is now a member of the Edinburgh one, called on me twice when she was stationed in Glasgow. She is now a balloon officer in the W.A.A.F. and is full of the joy of her work and would instil enthusiasm into anyone.

Mrs. Middleton (née Frew, clerk at Bostall Heath) also called and was very keen to hear, and interested in, all news of Old Comrades she knew.

Miss Emily C. Smith (Smithie) writes from the Transvaal that she "has gone all military" and is leading the same life as she did twenty-three years ago. She says she is not getting the same "kick" out of it but, of course, joined up with one thought only to do her bit in helping to win the war. She has joined the W.A.A.F. and is a telephonist in a hospital. She feels she could do better if she could speak Afrikaans. She says "I just speak two words on the phone and back comes the reply, 'Hello, Scotland!'" Another Old Comrade I came across is Mrs. Gilbert (née Bolton). She and Nixon were clerks in Miss Dax's camp in France. Along with Mrs. Young (née Petrie) we talked solidly for over an hour over old times.

Armistice Day. There was a simple service on November 11th and a crowd gathered outside the Municipal Buildings to see the Procession from the buildings to the Cenotaph. In the loggia were gathered the Lord Provost and civic officials, also representatives of the armed forces and women's services, etc. After the Last Post was sounded the Two Minutes Silence was observed. This was followed by Reveille and prayers. The Procession then moved out to the Cenotaph and placed their wreaths. Mr. Watt, W.R.A.F., represented the U.S. Club and laid the wreath.

E. M. Gilchrist.

Bristol and West of England Branch

Our first report of the year I am afraid, is one of sadness.

Our hearts go out in great sympathy with Mrs. Davies (née Milburn) whose husband died early in December, after a short illness. Theirs was a romance of "our" war, but the demands of a second war proved too great a strain to one weakened through the first struggle, and Mrs. Davies is left with the care of invalid parents.

Then we offer Miss Mounstephen our deepest sympathy in the loss of her mother. We as a Branch owed a great debt of gratitude to this fragile little lady for her hospitality on many occasions in the past; such wonderful teas and happy times in her beautiful garden. We thank her for such happy memories.

I met Mrs. Winter (née Pearce) the other day. She is keeping her mother company for a while, having returned from South Africa some six months ago, her husband now being with the Forces.

I hope to arrange a Branch Meeting very shortly.

ILFORD BRANCH, Please Note.—Mrs. Mary Cheesman writing on the 20th January sends the following message to members of Ilford Branch:—"I am working in a large house as cook. My son lives in the house with me. I have a very busy time as we are a large family and are very short of staff. I send you all my best wishes for 1942 and hope this year will see the end of the war." She mentions that she used to attend some of the Socials in peace time and that Mrs. Thomas was very good to her and helped her to make many friends.

AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE

It is sad to say that we have very little news of the A.T.S. to report this time. The Editor would greatly appreciate items, and letters for the Gazette as these would not only be of great interest to past and present members of the A.T.S. but to the still older Old Comrades who served in Q.M.A.A.C. She does not, of course expect any secret information which might make Hitler throw his moustache over the moon for joy, or cause a breakdown in his health before our armies have finished with him!

Senior Commander M. D. Thorne has joined the O.C.A. since we last went to press and it is a great pleasure to welcome her as an Old Comrade. She is already well-known to many of us as she was a Cadet in Emergency Service, a voluntary organisation for the training of potential officers which existed some years before the present war began. She says that she found the Camps then held have been a great help to her in her present Service.

The following very nice letter has been received from Corporal D. M. Hoare. It is a great pity that it cannot be read by the stupid and ignorant people who talk such utter nonsense about a fine Service.

"I have read one of the pamphlets which gives notice that the membership of Q.M.A.A.C., O.C.A. is now open to serving members of the A.T.S. I am very interested in this Association and feel that I would like to know more about it particularly as I am at present waiting to be posted overseas. I have served in the A.T.S. for about 19 months now and my only regret is that I was unable to join sooner. I would like to feel that when this present emergency is over, the friendliness and help-one-another atmosphere which prevails so generally in the Service may not be forgotten or laid aside and at the same time I would like to be able to keep in touch with women like myself who have found a great deal of happiness in serving in one of the Forces."

Miss I. Anderson of Gifford has sent a letter from one of her former Q.M.A.A.C. members now serving as a Corporal in the A.T.S. This racy story of a change of billets, a piano and a truck, not to mention a dark night, will possibly raise a smile or two and these are always pleasant. Corporal Adamson was known as "Frenchie" in Q.M.A.A.C.

"Since we have been moved I have been left in charge of a detachment. I thought when we came through here we were to be taken over by another N.C.O. but to my amazement I found I was the only one here. I have had a hectic week but am pleased with the results. This is a lovely billet, just the kind of house I like. Lots of cupboards and space. There's a grand storeroom where I keep the kit, with a fireplace so that it can be lit when anyone is working there and it keeps sheets and blankets from getting damp. The night we came was funny. The girls all went over in the first truck and I had to bring a piano. I waited two hours till eight men came to carry it down the stairs, got it on the truck and set out. Neither the driver nor I were very sure of the way. The mist came down and we got lost once or twice; had to stop and look to see what the piano was doing as it had castors and I had visions of it rolling out at the back. After we were well on our way a tin hat rolled out and then a kit bag, stopped and collected them. I said who lifts the piano off the lorry? It took eight men to get it on there and there was just the driver and I left. When we got here there was a very narrow

drive and a turn on the gateway. We got that truck in with not an inch to spare and then I had to think how we were to get unloaded. We carried all the small things in and I 'phoned to ask if we could have a fatigue party to shift the piano. Whoever answered the phone said I could if I sent the truck for them. The driver not knowing where he was to go! However two of the girls said would go with him so piano and all moved off again. They got to Battery and collected five men who were tickled to death. One played the piano and everyone wondered what was coming. The driver after his first experience of the gateway dumped the piano at the bottom of the drive and made them wheel it up, so they stopped and played "There'll always be an England" in the middle of the drive! We had quite a good concert party. I had to shut the door for the black-out and they were out in the dark. There are steps up to the front door, I was glad to see that piano safely landed. As long as I know it, it will never go up a stair if I can help it. The weather has been nice, either that or I have been too busy to feel cold. There's no difficulty feeding the girls, they are eating everything. They are wanting a party so I must see about it to-morrow. We have one hen in the garden, I don't know where it has come from, they were threatening to kill it but I said they had better not. I was keeping the poof thing and it would have to get its Christmas dinner with the rest."

BENEVOLENT REPORT for OCTOBER, NOVEMBER and DECEMBER, 1941

Three applications for assistance were received in October and three in November. There were no applications during December except one for clothing when it was possible to send a useful parcel from some second-hand clothing which had been sent to the Cupboard.

In the other six cases mentioned a grant was made by the Service Women's Benevolent Fund.

A donation was received from an Edinburgh member which was much appreciated.

The purposes of the grants were as follows:—

A self-propelling chair given to an invalid, half the cost being borne by the British Legion and United Services Fund Benevolent Department.

One grant for spectacles.

One grant for the fees of a Nursing Home to cover 13 weeks, in co-operation with the B.L. and U.S.F. Benevolent Department. This was only needed for one week as the member was very ill and died.

A grant was made for clothing for a member in Ireland.

One applicant received a grant for coal for the winter, she is an invalid suffering from rheumatism.

A grant for surgical boots was made to another sufferer from the same trouble.

O.C.A. Cupboard

Council will be interested to hear that the lovely woollen garments, made by members of London Branch and sent through Miss Sanderson to the Cupboard in 1939 and 1940 and rescued from the office at 5, Chesham Place, have been sent to Miss Bertrand, Secretary of the Albany Institute, Deptford.

As there had been no application for parcels the General Secretary consulted with Miss Haines, Secretary of London Branch. She asked Miss Sanderson about the matter and finally it was decided to send all the woollies and a few other garments which remained to Miss Bertrand.

Miss Bertrand wrote to say "A thousand thanks for the lovely parcels you gave to Lady Katharine last Thursday, what beautiful wool and how beautifully knitted, it is not often we get such large sizes, it will mean being able to send two to quite a number of our evacuated children; thank you so very much."

Miss JANET PAYNE (U.A. Ripon, Scarborough and York) writes from Adelaide, S. Australia, where she is Lady Almoner at the largest hospital in the continent, of a three weeks' holiday in Perth where she visited a cousin, married to a Swede, who had spent her last days in England at Payne's home in Oxford in 1910. She writes:—

"Now I can add Western Australia (or parts of it!) to my knowledge, now pretty considerable, of this vast continent. I will tell you about that holiday straight away. It entailed a mere 1,600 miles of train journey, spread over three days and two nights, with two changes. I went second-class. The return fare was £14 odd, inclusive of sleepers two nights and all meals. One cannot travel without including these necessities? luxuries. On all other long distance train journeys I have made food and sleepers have been optional, but I suppose on this—what is known as "The East-West Line"—there is no opportunity of getting food other than on the train; it is quite a good plan; therefore, to include it in the ticket. The meals for 1st and 2nd class are identical but the accommodation is better for 1st class. They have only two sleepers to a compartment where 2nd class has four; they have a lounge car with piano and note-paper provided, and also showers. We had only the public wash-rooms and no drawing-room, but what do these trifles matter! 600 miles of the trip is over the Nullarbor Plain. It is not so plain as it sounds, although there are no trees. There is plenty of low growth; in fact, the red sand, which is the ground work, is practically all covered with a low-growing blue-green plant, salt bush, slightly succulent, and in some places, blue bush, very similar. There are occasional patches of colour where small flowers are blooming—usually of the everlasting and daisy type, in white, yellow or mauve. About every sixty miles are sandy spaces where a small settlement has been made for the fettlers, i.e. the men who look after the line. Here are from six to twelve wooden houses, all of one type, with large expanse of galvanised iron roof to catch the rain. This is the only water supply and is sufficient provided they are careful. Each house has scratched a square of sand from the desert and turned it into quite a passable garden, where vegetables and our ordinary English summer flowers were thriving. Later in the season these gardens would, I imagine, be dried up completely. Part of the interest of the journey was to get out of the train—when time allowed—and talk to the women and children who live there solitary lives. One woman told me she had lived thus for 12 years, with one month annually and a free rail pass to a town. They are dependent on the train for all supplies, including wood for fuel. The train goes three times a week in both directions (single line, of course, except at crossing places). When one thinks of the great distance the line itself is wonderful. The carriages are narrow on account of the narrow gauge, but remarkably comfortable, and first-class hotel food. One night train is a little more primitive than the other in that no sheets are provided, but only one (heavy) blanket over a shiny upholstered bunk.

I went at the right time of year (September) when travelling on the whole was cold. The train was not

heated and I was glad of a hot-water bottle and my own extra rug. In summer the long journey would be deadly from heat and the carriages would be kept shut in with blinds and shutters—and that would be very uninteresting.

Kalgoorlie is on this line and we changed trains there and had time to walk through the town, but not time to reach the gold-fields. We could, however, see the shafts of the mines and the dumps from the train. It is only 300 miles from Perth."

NEWS OF OLD COMRADES

We are very sorry to learn from **Mrs. King**, who called to see the General Secretary, that **Miss D. M. Johnson**, who served overseas as an Administrator, had a bad accident to her back and has been in a Nursing Home at Winchester since last May. We hope that she will soon be quite well and send our sympathy and best wishes.

Miss Beatrice Farmar is now living in Hereford as she was bombed out of her home in Southampton.

Mrs. Starkey and Miss Simpson, who were also at the First Army Infantry School are living at Deal and sent greetings at Christmas.

Miss Nixon lives with her sister at Petersfield and is busy digging for victory and plays in an orchestra in her less strenuous moments.

Mrs. Nellie James, who served as a cook at Aubergue and Wimereux, sends greetings to all Old Comrades who remember her. She was bombed from her home and has been very happily evacuated to Harrow.

Doris Evans, who served as Pilcher-Clayton at Rouen, writes from Mission City, British Columbia. She was sorry to read of the death of Ethel Larner who was a Camp mate of hers. Mrs. Evans sends best wishes for 1942 to all Old Comrades.

Mrs. Ina Frith, served as Forrest, writes from Rose Bay, Sydney, Australia. She enjoys reading the Gazette. She says that she was lucky enough to be able to attend the 1933 Annual Dinner and to have the pleasure of replying to Lord Athlone's toast on that occasion. She also send greeting for 1942.

Miss Margaret I. John writes from Wales and sends best wishes for 1942.

Mrs. H. Underhill, who served some time in the A.T.S. has renewed her subscriptions. She tells us that Mrs. Young, also of Chester, has a daughter serving in the A.T.S. Mrs. Underhill served as Greaves.

Mrs. E. Mills, Secretary of the Ex-Service Women's Club at Sydney, sends good wishes from Mrs. Peachey and all members to all Old Comrades. She writes that in September the Club had its 21st Birthday and everyone subscribed towards a huge cake, with all its trimmings. Another cake was presented and raffled and it was won by Mrs. Mills. Most fortunate as Mrs. Mills' daughter was soon to have her 21st birthday and so had a fine cake. Our congratulations to both Mrs. Mills and her daughter.

Mrs. B. Rutherford (Whan) writes: "Will you please convey to all members my wishes for a Happy New Year, especially Signallers of Dannes and Etaples."

Teddie Slee tells us that Newcastle Branch is arranging a party for the wounded very shortly. She has been visiting victims of the air-raids in hospital. One poor girl of 17 with no hands, and another has lost her leg, but they are so brave about it.

Irene Smith regrets that she is unable to do more but as she has home ties and war-workers as well billeted on her she must have her hands full. In addition she does fire-watching and gives time to help

the W.V.S. At Christmas time they entertained two Service men and gave them a happy day so we can hardly say that she is not doing rather more than "her bit." She has lately heard from **B. Davison** of The Buffet, Australia. When serving Irene Smith was at Larkhill, Camp 20, and she would be pleased to hear from any who remember her as "Smithy or Darkie." We are glad to hear that **Miss I. H. Anderson** of Gifford, has made a good recovery from her serious operation. She sends best wishes to everyone.

Mrs. G. D. Hardy and Edinburgh Branch send congratulations to **Miss Crombie** on getting her Commission in the W.A.A.F. We hear that she is a Balloon officer and able to hold her own with the youngsters in all the hand work.

Mrs. Dora Stedman is very busy helping to collect salvage at Llandudno. They have three "discarded babies' prams (I only hope it is not the babies that have been discarded!) named Sally, Percy and Winnie (which seems to point to the fact that the babies HAVE BEEN discarded!) and we make our collection in those." She sends greetings to all members.

Miss Mary Storer sends good wishes. We are glad to hear that she is now much better.

Mrs. Alice Marwood sends a cheery account of the Christmas party at the Old Folks' Home where she lives. Lady Richardson was again very kind and gave a parcel of bed-socks, mittens, gloves, biscuits, jam and 10 lbs. of pork! Oh! who wouldn't be an "old folk" sometimes!!

Private C. Hutchinson, who has lately become an Old Comrade, arrived from France at the end of October to join the A.T.S., after a voyage through Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar and much Atlantic Ocean. We congratulate her; that's the spirit of which A.T.S. as well as WAACs are made!

A. L. Brown, who was Forewoman Brown of Place Capécure, Boulogne, writes from Brockenhurst that she sometimes meets Mrs. Samuel (Elkin, U. A., Calais) who is now living there also. They have great talks about the old Army days, they feel that those of us who are now too old to serve again have handed on our tasks to very worthy successors in the A.T.S. Brown sends best wishes for 1942 "and may it see the end of Hitlerism and the war brought to a final end."

Miss W. M. Johnson says that she has had some wonderful letters from Rouenites. **Dais Williams**, now married, lives in Canada and her elder boy is in the Navy. **Daisy Cook** writes from Wimbledon, she has a boy of 17 and **Dorothy Dale** has three boys, one of whom has joined up. Miss Johnson was very pleased to hear from **Judy Judge** and wishes she could get news of **Dalton, Chitty** and **Kitty Laughton**.

OBITUARY.—We announce with regret the death of Mrs. Margaret McGuinnis Murray on the 17th November, 1940. She served as McGuinnis at Glasgow and in France. We can only be glad that she has been spared further suffering as she has been ill for a long time. Her home was in Motherwell, Lanarkshire.

WEDDING.—All Old Comrades who knew Miss Horniblow will join in wishing her every happiness in her new life. The following notice is taken from "The Daily Telegraph"—

DALTON-HORNIBLOW.—On December 20th, 1941, John E. Dalton, O.B.E., of Allendale, Menston-in-Wharfedale, Leeds, to E. Hilda Horniblow, C.B.E., H.M.I., daughter of the late F. T. and Mrs. Horniblow of 23 Hamilton Road, Reading.

BRANCHES

Adelaide.	Mrs. L. M. Smith, 52, Wattle Avenue, Brighton, Adelaide, Australia.	
Birmingham.	Miss E. I. Dipple, 17, Somerset Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, 20.	
Blackpool.	Mrs. K. Fry, 136 Albert Road, Blackpool.	
Bournemouth.	Miss F. E. Lever, A.T.C.L., Craighurst, 7 Church Road, Parkstone, Dorset.	
Bradford.	Mrs. A. Goodman, 2 Tivoli Place, Little Horton, Bradford.	2nd Wednesday.
Brighton.	Mrs. E. C. Jolly, 107 Preston Drove, Brighton, 6.	Aqua Restaurant, Old Steine, Brighton. 2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.
Bristol and West of England.	Miss B. Mould, 11 The Tynning, Bath.	Not fixed.
Cheltenham.	Mrs. Mann, Cornerways, Churchdown, Gloucester.	
Exeter.	Mrs. Vicary, Castle House, Powderham, near Exeter.	16 Dix Field, Exeter. First Thursday of the month, at 3.30 p.m.
Edinburgh and East of Scotland.	Mrs. G. D. Hardy, 51 Lockharton Ave., Edinburgh 11.	Women's United Services Club, 12 Drumsheugh Grdns., Edinburgh 1st Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Glasgow and West of Scotland.	Miss E. M. Gilchrist, M.B.E., 13 Royal Terrace West, Glasgow, C.3.	251 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. Every Wednesday, 7.30.
Headquarters.	Mrs. Pratt Barlow, O.B.E., 82, Lancaster Gate, W.2.	
Irish Free State.	Mrs. O'Meara, M.B.E., Cove Cottage, Dunmore East, County Waterford.	Not fixed.
Leeds.	Miss E. Mair, 27 Virginia Road, Off University Road, Leeds.	5 Park Square, first Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.
Liverpool.	Mrs. E. Edwards, 8, Wyndcote Road, Liverpool, 18.	
London.	Miss B. Haines, c/o 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.	See Branch Reports for dates of meetings.
Ilford.	Mrs. Taylor, 15 Stanhope Gardens, Ilford, Essex.	Mrs. E. A. Thomas, 94 Whyteville Road, Forest Gate, E.7. Alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.
Manchester.	Mrs. G. Cardell, Lancaster House, Salford, 7.	Raglan Café, 24 Mosley St., Manchester. 2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 to 10.30 p.m.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.	Miss C. W. Maunder, 31, Norwood Avenue, Heaton, Newcastle.	Members notified individually.
	Mrs. B. Lester, Gourock, Redewater Road, Fenham.	Interviews at British Legion, N.E. Area Offices, 10 Leazes Terrace, Newcastle.
New South Wales.	Mrs. E. Mills, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.	Ex-Service Women's Club, 26, Victoria Street, Bondi Junction, N.S.W.
New York.	Mrs. G. Rose. Phone Nevins 8-5250.	
Norfolk.	Mrs. L. W. Chilvers, 32 Grove Road, Norwich.	Monthly. Members notified individually.
Northern Ireland.	Sergt. Major N. Hughes, A.T.S., Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co. Down.	Third Wednesday in the month at 8 p.m.
North Staffs.	Mrs. G. H. Clough, 3 Eleanor View, Newcastle.	Nell Gwynne Restaurant, Newcastle. Second Tuesday in month 7.30 p.m.
Notts.	Mrs. Skellington, 20 Burns Street, Nottingham. Tel. 76614.	First Wednesday in the month, 7 to 9.30 p.m.
Oxford.	Mrs. Jackman, 23 Grays Road, Headington, Oxford.	Members notified individually.
Plymouth.	Mrs. O. Foster, 2 Notté St., Plymouth.	
Cardiff and S. Wales.	Mrs. Diana Foster, 7, The Grove, Rumney, Cardiff.	Y.M.C.A., Cardiff. Second and last Tuesday at 7.30 p.m.
Shoreham-by-Sea (in abeyance).		The Café, 5 The Street, Old Shoreham. 2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30 p.m.
St. Leonard's.	Miss E. Taylor, 58 West Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea.	58 West Hill, St. Leonard's-on-Sea. Not fixed.
Teds-side.	Mrs. Fryer, 12 Shildon Street, Darlington, Co. Durham.	
Transvaal.	Mrs. Widdicombe, 8 Gascoigne Street Observatory, Johannesburg, S. Africa.	

Editor Gazette—Mrs. A. E. B. Johnston, 82, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2.

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