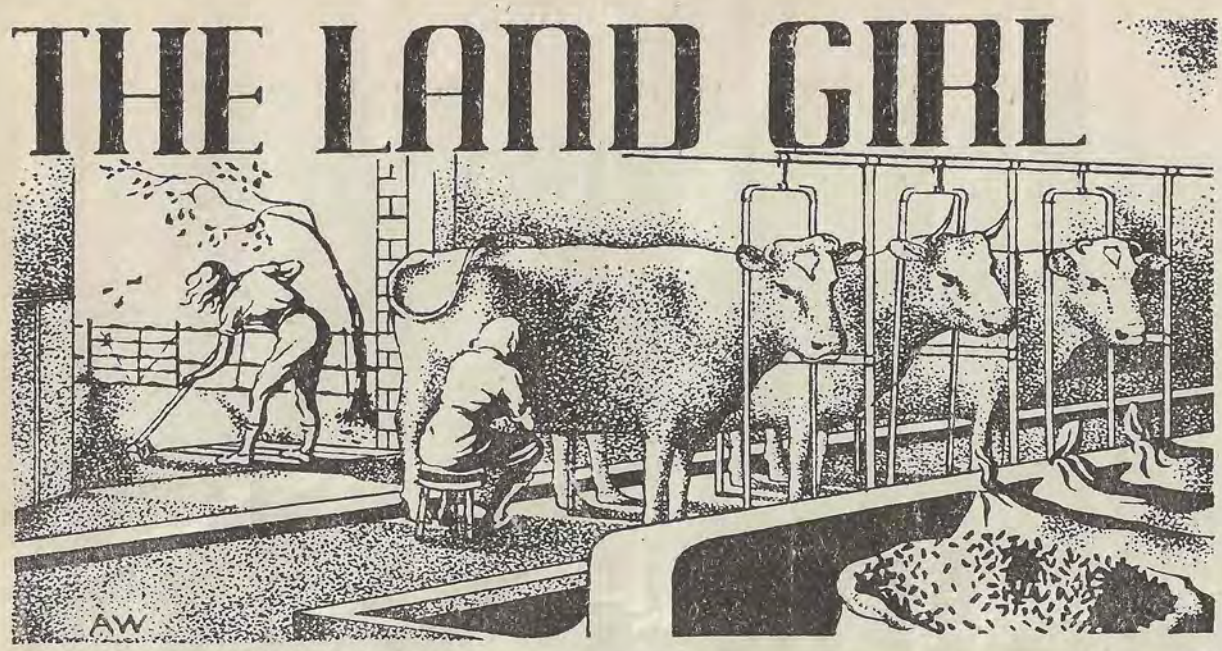
THE LAND GIRL



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WELL DESERVED

IT is well known that Cinderella comes into her own at Christmas time so nothing could have been more appropriate than the New Year Honours List. The award of the M.B.E. to Mrs. Simpson, Organising Secretary of Northamptonshire W.L.A., and of the B.E.M. to Miss E. Bedford, 36317 (Cornwall), Miss Birtwistle, 9825 (Wiltshire) and Miss Laycock 29131 (Denbighshire) gave us all a warm and comfortable feeling. The C.H. for Mr. Hudson is also a source of pleasure. Our Minister has been a staunch friend to the Land Army and has struggled valiantly on many an occasion to fit a glass slipper (gumboot?) to the Land Girl's foot.

Mrs. Simpson is one of the County Secretaries who have borne the heat and burden of the day ever since the Land Army was first started. She has remained undaunted by the difficulties and problems which are the inevitable lot of Land Army officials and has justly earned the respect, loyalty and warm affection of her fellow workers and volunteers in her own county, as well as of all those who know her outside its borders. The three volunteers who now possess the British Empire Medal are, according to their employers, the answer to a farmer's prayer. Annis Laycock has done general farm work (including milking) on a farm on the top of a mountain four miles from a village for almost four years. Thelma Birtwistle from Lancashire has been on the same Wiltshire farm since October, 1939 and is now second herdsman to a pedigree T. T. herd. Elsie Bedford, of London, has been for nearly three and a half years a milker and dairy worker on an isolated Cornish farm where she has now charge of the herd. These three have faced and overcome all the chief dragons which may beset the Land Girl's path—loneliness and isolation, long distance from home, early hours and little leave, hard and often monotonous work in all weathers—and they have accepted the responsibility which their experience has brought them. There are others like them who may justly feel they share the honour awarded to these three volunteers. New recruits now joining the Land Army will be encouraged by their example and the rest of us will be strengthened in our determination to uphold the reputation which the early volunteers have won for the Women's Land Army.

M. A. P.

WAR AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEES— WHY AND HOW ?

By Anthony Hurd

Photograph of the author

AT one of the "Brains Trust" meetings that have become so popular in some counties, one of the questions was "Why have War Agricultural Committees—what is the use of them?." The question came from a Land Girl. Probably her employer lets fly occasionally at all committees and controls and she genuinely wanted the answer. Possibly too some of the girls who are employed by War Agricultural Committees may like to know why they exist and how they work.

It has been my job in the war to act as one of the Minister of Agriculture's Liaison Officers. There are 14 of us, each acting as a link between the Committees in a group of counties and the Ministry in Whitehall. So I have seen something of the work of these Committees. They were formed immediately on the outbreak of war in September, 1939. The members had been selected before and their appointments could go out to the counties straight away. The members of the Executive Committees are appointed direct by the Minister. They are in fact his agents in each county. They are not paid. They give their time and experience freely as the local leaders in the campaign to get full production from the land. For the most part, the members of the Executive Committees are farmers. There is usually one landowner member and always one representative of the farm workers and one from the Women's Land Army. To these Executive Committees, the Minister delegated powers under the Defence Regulations, reserving to himself only the most drastic such as the power to turn an unsatisfactory farmer out of his farm to make way for someone who would use the land to better advantage.

Each of these Executive Committees formed District Committees so that there is a Committee member in touch with every farm in the county. Possibly a member of the District Committee may be responsible for 50 or 60 farms, some large and some small. He keeps in touch with each farmer and tells him what is required from him in the way of wheat, potatoes, sugar beet and the other priority crops that must be grown in war-time. The Committee members should also be able to help the farmer to get what he requires in the way of new machinery, fertilisers and so on.

So much for the Committees themselves. They have officers such as the Executive Officer and his assistants in each county and District Officers to keep the show running smoothly in every locality. The Commitees also have Technical Officers who can advise farmers about the lime requirements of their soils, the making of silage, the treatment of soil pests, the care of machinery and the improvement of livestock. Indeed the farmer can now get expert advice on any matter without charge. There is no doubt that this free advice has contributed largely to the great increase in output achieved since 1939.

Why are Committees needed at all?

Would not the ordinary farmer, knowing that extra production must be got to save shipping, do his utmost without control? Certainly the farmer is as patriotic as any other member of the community but the change over from grassland farming to arable cropping meant a real revolution in many districts. In some of the Midland parishes there wasn't a plough or a man who knew how to plough before the war. Their old grass was holy ground and it needed

someone with authority to come along and tell them what they must do and how they must do it so that the nation could be properly fed even though food shipments had to be cut drastically. The members of the Committees being good farmers themselves know which fields are most suitable for arable cropping and more particularly the ground likely to grow wheat well or which is more suitable for potatoes or roots. There were some crop failures in the early days. There would have been many more if the Committee members and the Technical Officers had not been there to give advice to those farmers who needed it.

Of course there are many farmers who know thoroughly the job of arable cropping but even in East Anglia and the arable belt of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset, there are farmers who benefit from timely advice. They will take this advice readily enough from men whose farming they respect. If it came from Whitehall or some provincial centre, the advice, however sound it might be, would not be so acceptable. Some farmers would always take a joy in saying "I did what the official told me and look what a muck it is." Then it is necessary to have some control of cropping to ensure that farmers of the country produced what the Ministry of Food requires in the way of wheat, potatoes and sugar beet. It has not been at all easy to get the potato acreage required. We are now growing practically double the pre-war acreage but farmers in many parts of the country do not take at all kindly to potato growing. As Land Girls know, potato picking is not everyone's choice. Still, with Orders served on them to grow a specified acreage, the job has been done and the extra potatoes are a valuable standby to the country. But I am sure that we should not have got everyone to produce what was required unless there had been some form of control and what better form could this take than control by farmers themselves which is what the War Agricultural Committees provide? Fewer mistakes are made and things run much easier this way than if Whitehall had tried to direct everything in detail from Headquarters.

How do War Agricultural Committees work?

The Executive Committees meet once a week or once a fortnight. They consider the memoranda that come from the Ministry and while the flow of paper has been limited to what is really necessary, there are circular instructions of some kind to be considered at every meeting. The County Executive Committees then decide how they can best put the Ministry's instructions into effect. Then there are the reports from the District Committees giving particulars of farms where directions are needed or where the farmer needs help in the way of labour to carry out ditching or some other improvement that will enable him to get better crops. Then there is the allocation of new tractors and machinery to be considered.. Farmers make their applications for new tractors and these claims are put in order of priority so that those who need them most get them first. The rationing of feeding stuffs also comes under the County Committees but this is now largely a matter of routine, so many coupons being allowed for the gallonage of milk produced, so much for farrowing sows and so on.

Then there is the pest destruction work which has become increasingly important as we grow more corn.

The Committees now have their own Pest Destruction staff and where rats or rabbits have got too numerous, the Committee can put a team of Land Girls or others to clear up the trouble. Another problem tackled by the County Committees is the organisation of threshing. With so much extra corn being grown, steps had to be taken to organise the threshing facilities in each county to ensure that those farmers who did not have their own threshing machines, get their corn threshed in reasonable time.

Each contractor has a definite zone of operation and he is responsible for threshing the corn on all the farms in a group of parishes. In this way, cross journeys are avoided and each threshing set is kept fully employed.

This outline of the work of War Agricultural Committees would not be complete without some reference to the land which Committees are farming themselves. In every county there have been some farms and stretches of derelict land which no indivual was willing to tackle properly. The Committee had to go in to put the land in proper order for cropping and farm it for a time. You do not hear much criticism of Committee farming and you would hear much less if everyone realised that Committees only take other peoples "leavings" They get all the most difficult jobs left to them. But someone has got to take the risk if the country is to get every possible bushel of corn and ton of potatoes.

When the history of this war comes to be written the part which War Agricultural Committees have taken in getting the maximum output of food from our soil will deserve high praise and I have no doubt will get it. About 5,000 farmers form this volunteer army. Their work is not always pleasant, sometimes they have to pull up a neighbour who is not farming as well as he should and sometimes they get abused for their pains. But the country will surely say that the "proof of the pudding is in the eating" and that thanks to the War Agricultural Committees and to the willing co-operation of the great body of farmers and farm workers, our land is making a great contribution to keeping the nation well fed and fighting fit.

A DAIRYMAID'S DILEMMA

As usual in the misty dawn, I went to call my cows in, but this morning they were not waiting for me at the gate. They were sitting solemnly in the middle of the field. My persuasive calls were in vain and beginning to lose my patience I started to walk across to them but still they ignored me. My Wellington boot was raised in mid-air ready to give Maggie a dig in the hind quarters when she turned her head and bellowed indignantly:

"I will tolerate this no longer," I was so surprised I almost forgot to bring my foot to the ground again. Did I hear correctly? As I stared back in amazement, the leader of our herd rose with some dignity and after carefully stretching and flicking her tail violently to and fro for several seconds, looked me straight in the eyes and declared:

"Speaking for us all, we have come to the conclusion that we have had enough of you—who call yourself a Land Girl, whoever heard of such a thing. For no particular reason as far as we can see, our life, since you came has been very unsettling. How would you like to be hustled at an undignified speed into the shed every morning, as we are because *you* are late, and then rudely shoved over while a chain is flung round your neck, often hitting you under the chin when trying to eat your cake peacefully? Not to talk of being pulled and tugged, without any regard for one's figure. No wonder the heifers who are not so old as us and have more personal pride hold back their milk to make you have a little more respect for them. But we who have been good milkers, resent our tails being tied up because we choose to flick them in rhythm with our chewing. If you object to us flicking them in your face and our shifting our position from time to time, only because you keep us so long, why do you milk us at all?"

I had no time to reply in self defence when old Sally took up her position behind me and prodded me in the rear with her horns to attract my attention.

"Another thing you forget is that we have our feelings, and to be discussed every morning individually with the Boss is most degrading, especially when most of the things you say about us are very personal. It is enough to make any cow of good breeding curdle her milk with contempt."

"But I had no idea that you....." I began, but was cut short by Ginger's slow advance. Now Ginger and I have never been very friendly since I started milking at Makehay Farm and I tried to back discreetly only to be reminded that Sally was still there.

"It is no good making any excuses for yourself now, you should have thought about it all a long while ago. We can endure it no longer and it has been decided to give you a lesson" she lowed threateningly. "We will show you what we mean before we start this morning's work."

"But please let me explain—" I faltered feeling a little scared at the look of determination in those sixteen brown eyes as they approached slowly, tails swishing faster and faster, and no hope of escape. They closed in on me tugging and pulling at me with their horns, preparing to toss me in the air, but a new voice interrupted them—the pulling stopped, the cows disappeared.

"Mary-Ann, wake up Mary-Ann, your alarm went off over a quarter of an hour ago and you will be late again."

I rose and dressed as quickly as I could and arrived breathless to find my cows ready and waiting for me at the gate with a severe yet sanguine look on their faces, as if they knew they had established superiority.

W. Kent. M. Kay, 58380.

IN A MARKET GARDEN

Most volunteers on General Farming seem to be rather vague as to the jobs we market gardeners have to do. Well, here are some of those jobs we do on our particular garden, I couldn't possibly mention all of them in one article.

We have nine large greenhouses and fourteen smaller ones, in which from November until about April we grow cress and, in one house, forced rhubarb. The rest of the year tomatoes are grown. Outside we have about eight acres of rhubarb, and small plots of lettuce, beetroot, turnips, mint, radishes and onions.

The cress season is much the same as described by K. Squirrel 95522 in her article on "Salad Days" in the September issue. For this job alone we have all the punnets to pack ready for filling, then for hours and sometimes days we are on our knees cutting, afterwards bundling the boxes which have to be sent away. After a house has been cut, the stubble is raked off and wheeled out, and the men dig and prepare another salad bed.

We were busy with the cress until

some of the houses had been planted with tomatoes, then we got the job of stringing them up, side shooting etc. We put clinkers in the large plant pots and helped to carry these, filled with soil, into the houses where the pot plants had to be. Later on we were allotted the regular job of watering and spraying, which sounds easy, and is really, but gets rather monotonous when all you can hear all day long is the swish of water and your own toneless whistling. Especially if it is a hot day; everyone knows what it's like in a greenhouse in summer, and there you stand in your gumboots, feeling like turning the hose pipe on yourself. We also have to put fertilizer round the plants (sometimes once a week) before watering.

We looked forward to picking the tomatoes, but it didn't prove quite as delightful as expected, after trudging up and down rows all day with heavy boxes of tomatoes. One day we got the job of going round all the houses and picking up every rotten tomato, and believe me, there were plenty. Never again will I say I'd like to throw a rotten tomato at someone, some of them look like dead mice, and smell like them. For once in my eighteen months' experience I didn't eat a very hearty tea.

In the meanwhile we had been outside two or three days per week pulling rhubarb; which (if a load has to be called for, or taken away somewhere) has to be got, rain or hail.

In the autumn every bit of the rhubarb plots has to be hoed and hand weeded, and some of the roots got out and put into the house where the forced rhubarb is to be. Then all the houses were cleared out of tomato plants and weeded. Afterwards the steamer (as we called it) came and sterilized the soil; a certain number of houses are done per year, a job which we don't have to do, thank goodness. Before the steamer arrived we worked outside lifting soil, filling barrows and wheeling them into the houses, also muck spreading which is an energetic job, but needed to be in the bitter cold weather we had for it—later we topped and tailed, washed and bagged turnips.

Now we are back in the cress again, spending another season on our knees, so I'll say a little prayer for you, Land Girls everywhere, and I hope you enjoy the Land Army as much as I do, the very best of luck to you all.

Lancs. W. Watson, 74031.

SWEET SIGHT

For a long time the girls of our Hostel have hankered to get the chance to look round a sugar-beet factory, to see exactly what does happen to this stuff that takes up so much of our time, and one Sunday our hankerings were gratified. We gathered that we were the first Hostel in the country to be thus favoured.

We cycled to the Station (7 miles) in the first foul snow and sleet of the winter, where we were joined by the County Secretary, and later, on arrival at Spalding, by the County Secretary for Holland, Mrs. Kettlewell, and Mr. Monks, personal liaison officer to the Minister of Agriculture, who had transport for us to the factory.

The first thing that greeted us was the strong odour of sour-smelling boiling beetroot, hot steam, and dampness underfoot. We picked our way through pools of water, dodged cold drops from overhead, and tried to interpret the broad Scottish accent of our guide.

We saw the first process of washing the beet, shredding it, and pulping it; we climbed ladders, we decended ladders, into this and that department. We were shown the waste extracted from the sugar, the sugar in tremendous condensers, and later in a brown treacly form—and tasted it too. There were men in gum boots and overcoats, and in another department men working in their trousers only, so great was the variation in heat. Girls were testing with chemical apparatus the density of the sugar, and men were supervising the crystallisation of it (then in a golden brown form) swung round in shining steel containers, by centrifugal force.

After two hours inspection we ended our tour in the bagging room, where we were allowed to help weigh the sugar in clean sacks, and our last glimpse was of the treasured stuff going down a movable belt to waiting lorries outside. We were then taken to Holland House Hostel to a lovely tea, where we were guests of the Warden and the N.U.A.W. We all decided that we preferred to grow the beet rather than work in a beet factory.

Kesteven. B. Naylor, 101494.

The author of the poem on the Land Army Christmas card was Corporal F. Young, W.A.A.F., who has most kindly welcomed its use in this way. All efforts to trace the author before publication were unsuccessful.

A QUIET DAY ON THE LAND

My road to the Park was blocked by Army vehicles. Working my way through the lines to the tune of "How be't cabbages, Miss?" "Look out, here comes the Land Army," "Want any helpers?" and similar comments, I finally reached my tractor and lost the Army. But my Fordson was entirely recalcitrant and a glance at my tools told me that I had no suitable spanner for the job. Some of Mr. Ford's spanners are made to fit nuts in general but none in particular. Others (for which mechanics have an appropriate name) fit one type in particular and no others. The local garage employs tractor drivers whose opinion of me as a mechanic is the cause of much hearty laughter. I can take it—but I see no reason for sticking my neck out. I preferred appealing to the Army for assistance. Conveniently at that moment an Army lorry pulled up a few yards away and a grin appeared, followed by a greasy pair of overalls and the required spanner; between us we managed to start the tractor.

All went well for some hours until two officers appeared, and informed me that they would be blowing up some trees on my field but that of course they would let me know when I was to take cover. Having always been interested in those subjects which should hold no interest for a young lady, I decided that now was my chance to learn something of explosives. The officers swallowed it whole and I soon handled gun-cotton and another explosive, learned that to touch dynamite was literally to get a headache and was deep in the mysteries of how one blows up a tree when there came a suggestive cough from the junior officer. The dynamite enthusiast raised his head.

"Er—the Class" suggested the 2nd. Lieutenant.

"Eh? Oh—where?" casually asked the 1st. Lieutenant as though expecting to hear they had just left London.

"Er—behind you."

The 1st. Lieut. spun round. I looked over my shoulder, saw a platoon of men approaching rapidly wearing half-concealed grins and decided it was time I went back to the land.

For the next half hour I was deeply engrossed in my work. I noticed that the class with its two Instructors had gathered round a tree, but nothing unusual appeared to be happening. The next time round I noticed uncomfortably that all troops had taken cover and the officers were walking rapidly in my direction. Then the 1st. Lieut. broke into a run—he had no need to tell me what to do. I was off the tractor and loping for cover before he had reached me. Off-duty I have difficulty in count-the hours, they flash by so quickly, but I experienced no difficulty in counting the seconds before that fuse burnt through. I had gone through my life history and had just remembered that I owed the postman 2½d., when smoke belched from the trunk of the tree, my head played boomps-a-daisy and the blast nearly knocked me off my feet. The tree shuddered, a few twigs fell, birds flew away from surrounding trees—then everyone came out from cover with somewhat surprised expressions on their faces. I collected my knees and took them back to the tractor.

The next time I was given more warning, kept myself to a sharp walk and watched the proceedings from a safe distance. This time they managed to shift one small branch and the only remaining bird in the vicinity.

The morning passed quietly apart from occasional ear-splitting bangs. They were still working on the same old tree but did not appear to be disturbing it to any great extent. During my dinner hour I learned that my rival tractor-drivers at the garage had spent most of the morning diving into the air-raid shelter, under the impression that Jerry was unloading in the district. I did not disillusion them.

On returning to work I found several classes at the edge of the ploughing. while Instructors were watching men crawling along the ground between two white posts It looked asinine to me. I carried on with the ploughing for victory stunt, with no further difficulties except that as I worked along the various classes bordering the field, I found myself in danger of ploughing in a platoon of soldiers. Eventually the N.C.O.s decided that there were quieter spots in which to instruct their men.

The old tree was still standing. The 1st. Lieut. stopped to say that they were going to use a more powerful explosive. I said I thought it was about time they did something to put that tree out of its misery. The next time round a sergeant was sent over to escort me to safety. I was casually examining the white posts as I walked between them when a long arm reached out and almost lifted me a couple of feet to one side. "Mines"

All in the day's work.

said the sergeant "buried between the posts."

I'd had enough. I parked the tractor and went back to my billets for some peace and quiet.

At ten o'clock convoys started coming by the house—at midnight it was tanks and lorries—at 2. a.m. there was an explosive crack. Dynamite? No. Only a telegraph pole arguing with a tank. Naturally the tank won.

E. Kent. B. Mitchell 52465.

N. Rowland (E. Suffolk) "must say a word in praise of our Land Army boots. Until this year I had always worn sandals during the summer, and of course they spoil you. Well now no more of Clarke's sandals are available—I have found my boots comfortable and don't even wear socks for the sake of coolness, and I might add, darning!"

"Questions for To-Day and To-Morrow" is the title of a series of broadcasts on Mondays at 8 p.m. during Feb. and March. Housing, Education, Local Government and Industry are among the matters of public interest included in these Talks.

Heartiest congratulations to M. Coates 66378 (Yorkshire) who won the Ploughing with Horses open competition at Skipton recently. Miss Coates was at Buckingham Palace party last July and is one of Yorkshire's best volunteers. On the day of the competition she walked seven miles in the rain with her horses to the competition and back again afterwards. All the other competitors were men.

Chilblain Remedies suggested in "The Landswoman," 1918, for unbroken chilblains.

1. Grate some carrot **very** finely, mix with lard in equal quantities, put in the oven and when the lard is melted, stand in the bottom of the oven until lard and carrot are well blended. Use when cold.
2. Paint with methylated spirit.
3. Slice a raw onion. Sprinkle with salt, and use a fresh slice to rub on each chilblain.

Before using any of these remedies, bathe the affected parts with **very** hot water, to which a little soda has been added. Dry well, then apply your remedy.

WANTED.—Riding Jacket, good condition. Bust 38 in. Waist 33 in. Lees, Pitney Hill, Pitney, Taunton, Somerset.

PIGGING IT

I am a pigherdswoman responsible only to the management. I do all the breeding myself and my duties include farrowing, weaning, tattooing, (that is stamping a number in each ear so that each piglet can be registered in the National Pig Breeders Association Herd Book) and grading. First, I choose my best gilts, these are future mothers. Next come boars; if I have had any enquiries I save a few for sale. The rest are castrated and later fattened for bacon. Feeding is a problem these days but I am fortunate in being able to get camp swill—a rather messy business this.

"Mucking out" and bedding down fill up the morning—just when I think I can have a breather the Manager comes down and shows me a letter from Scotland. Will I send a gilt (in pig) by such and such a train. I pick one out, take its ear number, polish it up and off it goes, followed by its pedigree (this by the way is homework), which gives the name and number of its Dam, Sire, Grand Dam and Grand Sire.

Then comes the climax, I am asked to take five pigs to the National Pig-breeders Annual Show and Sale at Reading in October. I am away two days, a very hard but interesting experience. I parade each one before the judge awaiting the results! Out of my five pigs I receive one third and two reserves. I receive my rosettes, then the high light begins, the grand parade in the Ring where each pig is bid for. I sell four and bring my boar home, to-day I have railed him to a buyer in Dorset.

I have only been fifteen months at the job. I have had my failures I'll admit, I don't brood on them but correct each as they appear. I think there must be many more girls with equal responsibility, others, shall I say, only need coaxing.

Beds. L. C. Croft, 2365

After a sandstorm in the Middle East a newspaper photograph of G. Rippon 76981 (Derbyshire) taken with a calf at a Show, was found in a soldier's hat. He said it blew there—his friends said, Oh yeah? He bet them £1 he was telling the truth. They thought it was easy money but they had to pay up when he produced a letter from G. Rippon, obtained via the newspaper, to disclaim any knowledge of him and the £1, with the story, has come to the Benevolent Fund.

BIRDS IN MY GARDEN

Last winter, as I started work in the garden in the half-light, I would hear a greeting whistle, and there was a jaunty blackbird perched on a sod, his eye cocked up at me asking me to lose no time in helping on his breakfast. There was a thrush too, gentler, less obtrusive, but with a wide bright eye, which never missed a worm. A little song from an apple bough over my head would often surprise me in that almost songless time, and looking up, I would see the robin's red breast and soft, brown back as he paused for a moment in his busy and energetic life. Later in the season I was to see him engaged in battle with several rivals for his stretch of territory, and I hope the robin who nested there was my old friend and not a usurper.

Other winter companions are the starlings and tits. The starlings sit in an old half-dead beech tree and intersperse their chatter with imitations of the songs of other birds. Several times I hear, in the depth of winter, a willow-warbler or the thrilling note of a curlew but it is only a starling deceiving me. The tits are the first, apart from the robin, to start practising their song, as they flash from tree to tree, their plumage brilliant blue against the green lichen of the apple trees. I found a blue-tit dead in the green-house one morning, its feathers displayed an infinite variety of soft greens, blues and yellows, delicately contrasted with grey and black.

Then there is the wren that appears to live in the potting-shed, the tree-creeper that runs like a little mouse up the tree-trunks, the chaffinches, the wood-pigeons or "cushat doos" as we call them in Scotland.

March and April, bring the full-tide of bird song, "all little birds that are, how they seem to fill the sea and air with their sweet jargoning." They will be silenced as the cares of rearing a young family become more arduous and, when the young have flown, the moulting season comes on. August and September are quiet, for the garden is deserted by its noisier inhabitants, the sparrows and starlings which, with the finches, hurry in their parties to the harvest fields. With the falling leaves and hoar frosts, they return to their old haunts, as carefree as ever in face of the advancing winter. The robin and blackbird once more await the turned earth, and once more, I shall listen for the first few tentative notes that, in the darkest days of winter, prelude the coming of the spring.

Scotland. H. Carruthers, 5846.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

My job here is principally a milk-round, driving on an island off the Scottish coast. As far as I can count there are, on this side of the island, fifteen cars, six lorries, two buses (these appear twice a week) and two vans. No trains of course, which aren't necessary, as nobody wants to travel more than two miles at a time anyway.

The arrival of the steamer three times a week is a great event, and the arrival of a new face off the boat a topic of conversation for weeks. It is one of our jobs to supply milk to the boat on days of departure. We never seem to make this with more than three minutes to spare.

Being a milkwoman has its points. For example, in one single day I was offered tea on six different occasions. Unfortunately I could only accept half of these owing to lack of time.

Saturday is a bad day. Everybody decides to pay their accounts. I have to fix my mind on multiplying 2 pints at 4½d. and 2 at 2d. by seven and getting the sum total to reach something resembling what it should.

Why not issue tinned milk only and let the grocer worry?

Scotland. P. Russell, W.L.A. 5620.

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any other L.G's. have found how good clogs are, and such a saving on gumboots; with clogs and leggings I only wear gumboots when the mud is over boot tops and in snow. They are warmer, you can wear them all day and the damp does not strike through, as it does in leather boots.

I had my old L.A. boots clogged, they cost 7s. 6d. came back a little larger, but you need a felt sock in them. When the irons or clips wear out they only cost 1s. for new ones, the soles want oiling weekly to keep them in good condition, the only disadvantage being the earth treads to them rather more than boots. If girls are on market gardening you can get a digging iron fitted to prevent the spade cutting in the wood.

Notts. N. Harrison, 99234.

Dear Editor,

We three girls are billeted in the very small hamlet of Croxton on the Lincolnshire Wolds and all work on one farm. One day in the harvest field during a lull in work we were wondering how we could raise money for the Benevolent Fund; we decided to go round the village and scattered farms carol singing. We enlisted the help of four Home Guard boys from the farm and a few local girls and boys, making twelve in all. Our practices took place in an empty wash-house by a solitary candle.

The first night we sang round Croxton and finished up at our employer's who asked us all in and provided us with refreshments. The second night we sang round the adjoining village and another outlying farm where there are three more volunteers who were very surprised to see us and the last night we visited our Local Representative and were asked in to sing round the Christmas Tree and given sausage rolls and coffee.

During the three evenings we walked about twenty miles but we were never late for work in the mornings and were filling sugar-beet each day. Altogether we collected £7 10s.

Lindsey. K. Soames 100309, G. Plumpton 100308, J. Clarkson, 109553

Dear Editor,

May I write a few lines in praise of Uniform Departments in general and the Warwickshire one in particular? We don't hear very much of their splendid work, and I'm afraid we forget at times that dozens of Land Girls must be clamouring for the same things at the same time. Whatever I have applied for I have received immediate attention, and every consideration. Thanks a lot from a very grateful 'cowman' deep in the heart of Warwickshire.

Warwicks. 68997.

Long dark winter evenings offer an excellent opportunity for volunteers in hostels to get together and spend a little time in thinking out schemes to cheer up and improve the appearance of their hostel. Here are a few ideas—further hints will be welcomed.

Patchwork bedspreads.—Odd bits of material can be brought from home or a general appeal made to all and sundry in the neighbourhood.

Brightly coloured vases can be made from painted jam jars and painted bottles and ash trays from painted tin lids.

Cushions.

Notice Board.—One artistic person in the hostel could be put in charge of the Notice Board which can be put up in the recreation room and made attractive with gay and striking notices.

Mr. Cruger and volunteers, at the presentation of 70,000 dollars from the British War Relief Society of U.S.A. described in the November "Land Girl."

COMPETITIONS

Please note the following conditions for sending in entries for the three competitions now running in the "Land Girl."

1. **THE WINTER COMPETITION** set in the October issue will close on **March 15th.**

(a) All essays, poems, diaries and other literary efforts should be forwarded to the LAND GIRL, Balcombe Place, Haywards Heath, by the date given.

(b) Details, with measurements, of paintings, draw ings or handicraft work should be sent to the Editor. Competitors will then be informed what should be done with the actual entry.

2. **WHAT I SHOULD LIKE TO DO AFTER THE WAR** and 3. **BIRDS OF MY DISTRICT.** All entries must reach the Editor by March 1st.

Entries will be returned **if competitors send stamps.**

GUMBOOT HINTS

1. To make rubbers fit more snugly round the ankles—cut 1 inch wide rings from old inner motor tube and wear them on the boots just over the ankles —these help to prevent the boots from slipping up and down so much. Also, when doing jobs like dung hauling, or anything where dirt, hay, chaff etc., can get into tops of boots, draw bands up to the top of leg making small pleat in boot thus closing the tops and preventing dirt etc., from getting in.

2. Drying inside of boots.

Procure 2 medicine bottles, and 2 lemonade or wine bottles each with tight fitting corks. When boots are damp or wet inside, place a medicine bottle filled with **really** hot water and **tightly** corked in the sole of each boot, and the lemonade or vinegar bottle also filled with hot water, stand in the legs. This dries them beautifully over night.

Somerset. N. Smales, 13359.

BOOKS OF THE DAY

"Between the Thunder and the Sun." Vincent Sheean. Macmillan, 15s.)

"Keep the Home Guard Turning." (Compton Mackenzie, Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d.)

Mr. Churchill in the time of his political exile when he thought his career was over, the Duke of Windsor in social converse after the abdication; new and still hardly credible details of the scandalous death of the French Republic; a plain and comprehensible version of the affair of Rudolph Hess; an account of the Chinese Government which is not all praise; these are some of the novel items in Mr. Vincent Sheean's book, "Between the Thunder and the Sun." This is not just another of these lively, feverish, jerky reports of American correspondents running about the world before and after the catastrophe, but has shape, development and leisureliness. Mr. Sheean, though he shows distinct "Left" leanings, evidently had a wide acquaintance in lofty social and artistic circles, and he gives a picture of this society in its last days which makes a dramatic prelude to the following cataclysm. After France, the story passes to more familiar ground—Britain in her finest hour, the pathetic efforts of the author and his colleagues punching at the haystack of American complacency, and the breaking of the storm in the Far East. Instead of being overwhelmed by this torrent of experience, Mr. Sheean kept his head above water and preserved a sense of direction, which finally took him into the United States Air Force.

Some of the best jokes of the war have been provided by the long-suffering Home Guard and Compton Mackenzie raises them to their highest power in his hilarious story of the far Hebrides. It was not to be expected that Highlanders roused to defend their homes, trained and (eventually) armed, would be content with an enemy that never turned up. Fortunately, there were enough local feuds to provide a satisfactory substitute. Great Todday and Little Todday, "faerie lands forlorn," remember their ancient mutual raids and forays; "Ben Nevis," the mainland chieftain, means to recover for his Company the left-footed boot which Captain Waggett has so impudently detained on Great Todday, and the invasion exercise, abetted by Sergeant-Major Odd who has succumbed to a young woman of the islands, gives him his chance. Whitehall, Security Officers and abundant local eccentrics add to the general melée.

M. Jaeger.

STOP PRESS

Miss Kennet Hoyes (Hereford) cannot take any more orders for socks.

SCOTTISH NOTES

Aberdeen & Ellon.—The girls at Pittrichie Hostel were the guests of the Pitmedden Ladies Guild at a lovely party at which there were games, singing and very "unwarlike" refreshments. The Hostel had a "Burns" night on Jan. 25th with a lecture, songs and music by volunteers.

Alford & Deeside.—Charlotte Robertson has been four years on the same farm and was proud to receive her special red armlet recently at the hands of Sir Morton Smart, K.C.V.O., D.S.O. Three entertainments in aid of the W. & B. Fund were organised by Williamina Dickson, an energetic supporter of the cause. Dances for the same purpose were arranged throughout the area by Helen Reid, Margaret Ogg and Helen Mitchell.

Deer & Turriff.—K.L.B. Smith ran a successful dance at Strichen for the Fund.

Huntly & Garioch.—A very enjoyable party at Torryburn gave an opportunity to the residents to entertain their friends in the neighbourhood.

Angus.—A. Brown, E. Leslie, I. Gibson, M. McRae, L. Philip, R. Robertson, B. Sime and M. Stephen were responsible for the success of a dance held at Eassie for the W. & B. Fund.

Argyllshire (North).—There was a great gathering of the W.L.A. clan at Oban one Saturday when Mrs. Lees-Milne had a tea party at the Playhouse Cinema for her charges from as far away as the outposts of Mull, Coll and Tiree. Mrs. MacCallum, wife of the M.P. for the district, presented G.S. badges as well as a special four years' armlet earned by Agnes Murdoch. Afterwards there was a cinema show to which the party were entertained by the Manager of the Playhouse.

Ayrshire (North).—This district must look to its laurels, for, after many months of being in the van as chief supporter of the Fund it has been caught up and passed by one other area. Kilmarnock Club has had its second birthday and is going from strength to strength, what with its dramatics and debating groups and its classes in all sorts of interesting subjects. There are now five other clubs in operation—Beith, Craigie, Dunlop, Fenwick and Waterside—all of them successful and well supported. Beith had a very grand dance with everybody turned out in evening dress.

Ayrshire (South).—The main event of recent weeks was the opening of the Club rooms at Ayr. A truly delightful centre for L.G's. Misses Howie and Imrie arranged a very successful dance at Yelt Holdings, the object being of course the W. & B. Fund.

Dumfries-shire.—A series of C.E.M.A. entertainments given at different centres were thoroughly enjoyed by the L. A. and the Timber Corps. L.G's near Moffat were glad to be invited to a party for the Services arranged by the W.V.S. and Town Council.

Dumbarton & Renfrew.—The Paisley Club had a dance in the Art Galleries for their friends in the farming community—it was a grand affair. Twelve specially selected girls were entertained by the Y.W.C.A. at the Central Hostel, Glasgow; we hear they made a good impression. The Kirkintilloch Club is now getting into its stride and shows promise of much activity.

Fife (East).—As a result of several happy parties at the different hostels the district now leads all others—including North Ayr!—in the list of donations to the Fund. Congratulations—and hold it! Pitcorthie, Rolleston and Anstruther all arranged social evenings and there are more to follow.

Fife (West).—Mrs. Timmons kindly arranged a bridge evening in Lochgelly for the Fund.

Kincardineshire.—Mrs. Alexander, the Manse and the Women's Guild entertained local L.G's at a party in Banchory Devenick which was much enjoyed and appreciated. Irene Main (Morphie) was responsible, with her fellow workers, for the running of a very successful dance for the W. & B. Fund.

Kirkcudbright.—The girls at Terregles St. Hostel are a musical lot and much given to hospitality. They wanted a piano and other things so they just set about raising the necessary cash and in so doing entertained their many friends in the district. They also had a tea party at which they handed over to Mrs. Grierson a proportion of their own much needed resources for the W. & B. Fund. Mrs. Grierson presented G.S. badges at a party arranged by Mrs. Wilson, Beeswing.

Lanarkshire.—The Motherwell G.T.C. were delighted to see the W.L.A. film and hear what Miss MacDougall (D.O.A.S.) had to say about it.

Midlothian.—Arrangements are in hand to start a club in Edinburgh.

Nairn.—The warden and land girls at the Nairn Hostel were hostesses at a party given to the rest of the L.A. in the county. An excellent programme of music and games was prepared and the supper served by Miss McKellar was first class. Miss Henry (D.O.A.S.) presented G.S. badges and the Hon. Mrs. I. M. Campbell was accorded a warm vote of thanks for her untiring efforts on behalf of the Land Army.

Perthshire. (East).—The W.L.A. film was shown by Mrs. Paulin (D.O.A.S.) to a gathering at Fortingall and was much appreciated.

Perthshire (West).—L.G's on the Dunira Estate have just sent in a good donation for the W. & B.Fund.

Roxburgh.—Mrs. Palmer-Douglas kindly arranged a Whist Drive at Cavers for the W. & B. Fund.

Stirlingshire.—Cambus Hostel had a Whist Drive for its piano fund and a party at Fairhill. Carbeth runs an active sewing bee and Fairhill continues its weekly Discussion Groups with much animation.

W. Lothian.—The Foxhall Discussion Group has proved very successful and joint meetings are held with Winchburgh. M. Binnie unfortunately sustained a nasty accident in the course of her work, breaking her leg in two places. We hope she is making good progress towards complete recovery.

A series of photographs of Rosalind Cox 29202 was taken recently at a farm in West Sussex by the Ministry of Information for "PARADE." This is the newspaper of the Forces in the Middle East and the object of the photographs is to give the Forces an idea of a day in the life of a Land Girl. Miss Cox has been in the W.L.A. for four years, does general farm work and previously worked in the fur sales department of a big London store. We are informed that her appearance, like her record, is certain to get top marks from the Forces.

GOOD GIRL

I always change into my boots when I've finished the dairy in a morning, as I realise that its far from being an easy job trying to meet all our demands. Personally, I think we do very well, and it annoys me to hear the girls complaining.
Derbyshire. I. Sykes. 33646.

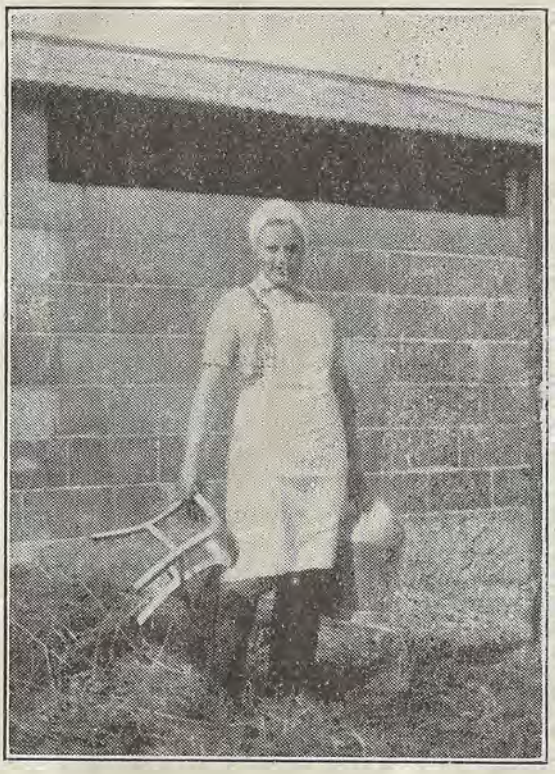
FOR SALE.—Black ski-ing suit, weatherproof, coat and trousers. Almost new, large size, 3½ guineas. Apply Editor.

BENEVOLENT FUND

On Jan. 31st the fund totalled £53,933 3s. 8d. The monthly total was £2,649 12s. 4d. Kent has the highest total of £5,548 14s. 10d. and Shropshire the highest monthly total of £293 4s. 8d.

Some of the most notable December and January contributions were: From **Salop** where £290 was raised by hostel dances—Morville and Edstaston hostels raised £52 4s. and £51 respectively, Bridgnorth Hostel's Whist Drive made £50; in **Cheshire** many splendid contributions from W.L.A. Clubs totalled nearly £200 of which £35 15s. was raised by the Wilmslow and Alderley Club. A Sale at Beeston Castle brought in £93 12s. From **Dorset** came £126 7s. which Mrs. Lionel Golledge raised by a dance, a draw and carol singing. In **Yorks** (N. and W.) a W.L.A. dance at Tadcaster raised £110 10s. 10d. From a visit to **Warwicks** Lady Denman brought back £108, of which £56 was from collecting tins and £52 from the Stratford W.L.A. Club. In **Berks.** the Winkfield W.L.A. Club's bazaar raised £100 and in **East Sussex** Mrs. Scott raised £100 by painting and selling pictures. **Oxford** sent £91 18s. 10d. as a result of the Blenheim Park Rally, **N. Wales** £71 3s. 7d. from the Llanstumdig W.L.A. Club, **Worcs.** £66 10s. from a Christmas Stall and Sale, while in **Pembroke** Mrs. Simon, Local Representative, sent us £56 12s. 9d. from a dance. In **Kent** the Bernhard Baron Trust sent a donation of £50. Glos. sent £33 10s. from the Cockryn W.L.A. Club; **Mon.** £30 from Glyn Hall Hostel the result of a dance, and **Flints.** £33 7s. from a dance at Rhoddean Hostel. In **Cambs.** Mrs. Gurrin persuaded the cook in each hostel to make a cake and raffle it and sent £26 as a result.

Among the counties arranging Flag Days and special efforts during the coming months are **Devon, Essex, Herts, Oxford, W. Suffolk,** so that their totals will go up with a bump when the results come in. We shall look forward to receiving the results of these in due course.



Audrey Mitchell, 88161, winner of a milking competition and one of three sisters in the L.A. in Dorset.

WOMEN'S TIMBER CORPS

Div. 5.—Members of the W.T.C. Social Club at Thetford felt much honoured when Mrs. Stevenson came to open their clubroom at 14a, Castle Street, on Dec. 20th. The room was nicely decorated, refreshments were served, and Mrs. Stevenson chatted to the girls. It is hoped that members of the W.T.C. in the neighbourhood or passing through Thetford will make good use of the room for reading, writing, etc. We also hope to be able to accommodate members for the night.

BEDS.—The Chairman and County Staff would like to thank all the volunteers who entertained them so liberally at Christmas parties. Lectures on health and beauty have been given at all hostels managed by the W.L.A. and we were lucky in having Mrs. Godfrey Phillips, of the National Association for Health Education, as our lecturer. These talks were so popular that we hope to arrange a week-end session at our W.L.A. club for all privately employed volunteers who were not able to go to the hostels.

BERKS.—We offer our congratulations to a member of our W.L.A. County Committee, Mrs. J. M. Taylor, J.P., of Oare, who has been appointed Chairman of the National Farmers' Union for Berkshire, and is the first woman to hold this position in our County. We are proud to send the new Four Year Armlets to 30 of our volunteers who qualified for them up to the end of December. The Proficiency Tests in milking and dairying have been started and it is gratifying that all the volunteers who have so far entered have passed. Other tests are to be held shortly. Courses for forewomen and charge hands have been arranged at our W.L.A. Hostel at Hewens Wood, and the varied syllabus should prove most helpful and instructive to the volunteers who are taking the course. We have now 23 Clubs fully launched, which includes 9 at our Hostels, and two more in the process of starting. Our monthly Newsletter is much appreciated and is nearing its third issue.

BUCKS.—A Christmas Party and presentation of 4-year armlets took place in the Town Hall, High Wycombe, on Dec. 11th, in honour of the 35 girls in the county who have qualified for the scarlet armlet. H.R.H., the Duchess of Kent, had graciously promised to make the presentation, but was unfortunately prevented by illness. The following telegram was received from Her Royal Highness: "I am very disappointed that I cannot be with you this afternoon. Please convey my congratulations to those who have gained armlets, and my best wishes to all members of the Women's Land Army in Bucks." Lady Addison kindly presented the armlets, and Lord Addison, Chairman of the Bucks W.A.E.C., spoke with much appreciation of the work that L.A. girls are doing at the present time.

We feel sure that the sympathy of all will be given o Lillian Robson, who by her presence of mind in a threshing accident last October saved the driver's mate from serious injury. Unfortunately, she herself was caught by the wheel and is still in hospital with severe leg injuries. We are proud of her brave action. Little Hampden House Hostel organised a carol-singing party during Christmas week, and collected the satisfactory sum of £8 8s. 11d. for the British Red Cross.

CHESHIRE.—On Dec. 30th North-west Wirral L.G.s with their representative, Mrs. O. Stapledon, entertained men from the various services—R.A.F., Navy, American soldiers and Pioneers—at the West Kirby Presbyterian Church. The Westbourne Road Services Club (who set aside a room for these girls) made them welcome; Mrs. Appleton and Mrs. Pickering provided a really first-class buffet. Dancing, team games, "musical knees" turns by the guests and delightful singing of old folk songs by Miss Primrose contributed to a very happy evening. On 27th Nov. Audlem volunteers co-operated with Senior Youth Club members to present a reveue, "Land Girls' Lyrics," in the Public Hall. The revue was written and produced by the Youth Club Leader, the Rev. L. Palin Barnett, and the Hall was filled to capacity. One happy result is a closer link between the W.L.A. hostel and the Youth Centre. Comberbach and District W.L.A. Club, as the result of a successful whist drive in Nov., at Antrobus sent £18 6s. 9d. to the Benevolent Fund. Onions, eggs, and a very tempting looking cake were raffled and refreshments were sold in the interval by L.A. waitresses. The bicycle raffle has been won by Miss D. M. Sharp, Prestatyn. By the time these notes appear, Mrs. Cartwright will have joined the staff as County Organiser.

CORNWALL.—All members in Cornwall are glad to hear of the award of the B.E.M. to Elsie M. Bedford, 36317, of Trevorvas, St. Just-in-Roseland. They feel this is an honour to the W.L.A. in this county as well as a compliment to Miss Bedford's fine record. She is in charge of a T.T. herd, has a tremendous enthusiasm for her work, and has been on the same farm for all her service in the L.A. On Jan. 29th Air Marshal Sir John Babington presented 30 4-year armlets at Truro. Congratulations to all these "old stagers." Proficiency Tests are going well, six L.G.s passed (one with distinction) in Outdoor Gardening and Glasshouse work in December, and several more entered in this branch in January, also there was a record entry for Milking and Dairywork, and we hear the Ratters are to try their skill in February. Arrangements are in hand for Tests in W. Cornwall in the near future, as well as in the Scillies. Here a W.L.A. Church Service was held in November. About 16 L.G.s attended, and read the lessons, sang in the choir, and took the collection. Ponsandane Hostel held a wonderful "Day" on Dec. 4th, and raised £82 for the Merchant Navy Libraries, by means of a Sale of Work, followed by an Auction and Dance. All the articles for sale (with the exception of the produce) were made by the girls themselves.

DENBIGH.—We feel very proud of Miss Laycock, one of the three W.L.A. members to receive the B.E.M. in the New Year's Honours. Miss Laycock has been a member of the W.L.A. since Dec. 1939. She has been employed by Mr. Hughes of Llechrhydau, Sellatyn, ever since her two months training at the Llysfasi Farm Institute. Many must have this record of service, but few English speaking town girls could have so completely adapted themselves to the life of a Welsh mountain Farm and have made themselves so indispensable. We send her our congratulations and to Mr. and Mrs. Hughes also. On Jan. 11th Bod Nod Old Hall one of our new Hostels held its first very enjoyable and successful whist drive. £18 4s. 0d. was sent to the Merchant Navy. Miss Betty Richards has sent us £10 12s. for the County Welfare Fund, this was the result of a dance got up entirely by herself and a friend. Miss Jagger is giving a cup to be known as "The Jagger Cup" for the best Club Programme over a period of six months. This will no doubt produce some novel ideas in the way of Club evenings. Miss Jagger hopes to hold a meeting of all Club leaders in the near future. I am sure we shou'd all like to thank her for the hard work and interest which she shows in the social side of the life in this County.

DERBYS.—Proficiency tests have been held this month; up to Jan. 18th 13 volunteers had passed, five with distinction. E. Jerram 6610 and M. Pellow, 9530, have been awarded the four-year armlet, and J. Turner 55585 recently won third prize in a tractor driving contest, for boys under 19 years of age and L.G's. A dance at Mickleover organised by E. Prentice 55082 and six L.G's raised £60 10s. for the Benevolent Fund. Mrs. Nuttall and volunteers organised a dance at Glossop, where

Five generations of pedigree dairy Shorthorns in Cumberland—great-great-grandmamma, on the left, was a foundation member of the herd; she is 14 and has had 12 calves.

the proceeds amounted to £20 1s. 2d. Two jumble sales run by Miss Wardley and L.G's of Chapel-in-le-Frith, Chinley, Whaley Bridge New Mills, and Hayfield, made a total of £57. At Brailsford Mrs. Wright held a very large sale in aid of the Prisoners of War Fund. 40 L.G's in her area turned up to help with the L.A. stall, which was stocked entirely with things given by girls or their employers. A dance in aid of the Welfare Fund at Chesterfield, on Jan. 14th was a great success; £5 was raised by auctioning vegetables, given for the purpose. Mrs. Baker held a party in Sheffield on Jan. 15th for the girls in her area and their friends; an excellent tea was followed by an entertainment by a conjuror-ventriloquist, and dancing. F. Smith, 126637 who prior to joining the L.A. was a hairdresser, has sent a further sum of 10s. to the Benevolent Fund, earned by hairdressing for her colleagues at Eaves Hall Hostel.

DEVON.—Congratulations to five of our rat-catchers who are being promoted as Supervisors in the Pests Control Department, to six more members receiving their 4-year armlets, and last but not least to Miss Medley-Costin on receiving a lovely red staff armlet from headquarters on completion of her four years' service in the County Office! Our drive to raise a £1,000 for the Benevolent Fund before the end of February is still going on. Efforts include flag days throughout the county (with the exception of the City of Plymouth, where permission for a permit has been refused), a dance at the Rougemont Hotel, Exeter, and a whist drive and dance organised by Miss Over at Bere Alston, which brought in £25 10s. 6d. for the Fund. Close co-operation has been reached with the Ministry of Labour Welfare Dept. and L.A. members will be able to make full use of their Reception Hostels and Recreation Centres as and when they open in this county. A centre will shortly be opened in Cowick Sreet, Exeter. We are sure that all W.L.A. members will be extremely sorry to hear of the sudden death of Mrs. Leverton, District Representative for Torrington. Her friendly personality will be very greatly missed by all the girls in her area.

DORSET.—Proficiency Tests are in full swing at present, and the results so far obtained are satisfactory, several girls having won distinctions. Christmas was a gay time; there were parties at all the Hostels, with Christmas trees, carols, and dancing. Members of the U.S. Forces were entertained in one Hostel. Rothesay House Hostel, Dorchester, arranged a dance on Dec. 9th which was most successful, and the proceeds have been sent to the Benevolent Fund. This Fund has also received a very substantial donation as the result of a dance which was organised by Mrs. Golledge of Sherborne; a draw for a bottle of champagne being very popular. The girls employed at Messrs. Makays Glasshouse Properties Ltd. Wimborne were presented with G.S. Badges, Armlets, etc., on Jan. 12th by Mrs. Aston, our Chairman. Two four-year armlets, were won by Mrs. Travers and Miss Sharland, (Forewomen). Messrs. Mackay employ more W.L.A. members than anyone else in Dorset, with the exception of the W.A.E.C. A very successful Rally was organised in the Bridport area on Dec. 11th, at which there were films, presentation of G.S.B's and armlets—including 3 four-year armlets—community singing, tea, etc. There was also a White Elephant stall, the proceeds of which will benefit the Benevolent Fund.

DURHAM.—By the time this goes into print it is hoped that the County Office will be in its new quarters at The College, Durham City. PLEASE NOTE.

Christmas parties have been plentiful. Lady Starmer's party was an outstanding success and her Toy Scheme in aid of the Benevolent Fund produced a very welcome contribution. The toys, made by the girls from scraps, were exhibited in a Darlington office window by the courtesy of the W.V.S. Sedgefield Hostel reports carol singers visiting neighbouring farms. Grindon Hostel combined a party with a most delightful exhibition of leather craft, made by the girls. The W.L.A. Broadcast at 12.30 p.m. on Christmas Day which caused such immense interest, was transmitted from Craig Lea Hostel, Darlington, and one of its pleasantest aspects was a donation of £5 from the B.B.C. accompanied by a charming letter to the Hostel. More clubs are being opened in the county, the latest being started by Miss Evans, 49, Cleveland Terrace, Darlington, and all W.L.A. members in that area are welcomed. An enterprising Y.W.C.A. Conference for L.A. Hostel residents was held in Sunderland when great interest was taken in the discussions on the various problems and questions of the day.

GLAM.—Before these notes appear in print, Glamorgan will have opened its first Club. It

will be held each Tuesday, at Cardiff, and if the enthusiasm which was shown at the "start-off" dance and social is any indication of the girls' feelings, the club should go well. The new hostel at The Grange, Llantwit Major, had a most enjoyable party on New Year's Eve, a very good beginning for one so young. Glamorgan is justly proud of her eight volunteers who have qualified to wear the very smart new red armlet. Proficiency Tests are well on the way and the first series take place in February. The following is an extract from a letter received from the National Growers' Association, Cardiff:—"At the meeting of the above District Branch, held at Cardiff on Dec. 14th, 1943, I was instructed to inform you that it was unanimously decided to write and convey the appreciation of our members for the help they have received from the Women's Land Army, and they also felt this should be put on record. Many of the members spoke gratefully of the way in which the girls generally had tackled their jobs, often under adverse weather conditions, and in fact many of them freely stated that they do not know how they would have carried on wihout this valuable assistance."

HANTS.—Proficiency Tests have made a flying start. 15 girls have been tested in machine milking and 13 have passed, 5 with distinction. Congratulations to all concerned. Hand milking tests will be held this month as well as tractor driving and general farm work. General Sir George Jeffreys presented Four Year Armlets at a party in Winchester on Jan. 15th. We were all surprised and delighted when, during the proceedings, our Vice Chairman brought the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser on to the platform. He made a short speech comparing the life in the W.L.A. to life in the Royal Navy. He said that sailors worked in all weathers, so did the W.L.A. Sailors had long spells of hard work with no relaxation, so did the W.L.A. Excitements were few and far between (the Royal Navy had just had one!) and must be as welcome to volunteers as to sailors. The party ended with an entertainment by the Flowerdown Follies. News comes in of many new Clubs being formed and of old ones taking on new life. Contributions are being received for a Travelling Handicrafts Exhibit. All Clubs are asked to send examples of their own work and these will be taken round for show by the County Organisers when visiting Clubs.

HEREFORD.—Since Christmas, there have been visits made to the hostels by C.E.M.A., M. O. I. Film units and E.N.S.A. film shows; there has also been a series of "Health" talks. In addition, individual hostels have had musical evenings arranged, and gramophone recitals; "make do and mend" demonstrations, and dressmaking classes. Several hostels have had parties and dances. There are several Clubs in process of opening in various parts of the county. Proficiency Badge Tests are to be held during Feb. and March. There have been fifty entries for the various tests. Further tests are to be arranged in the autumn.

HERTS.—Dec. and Jan. have been months of social activity throughont the County. Clubs and hostels have been busy with various entertainments and much hidden talent has come to light. To mention only a few: Letchworth and Shenley Lodge formed carol parties; Wyddial Hall produced a pantomime, Totteridge Park delighted their guests with two dramatic sketches and a Fancy Dress parade and finally Queenbury, Reed, showed their appreciation of the hospitality they have received by giving a party for the children of the village. This meant a sacrifice of sweet coupons and many hours spent in toy making. Turnford Club is also very active this winter and is becoming a recognised social centre in the district. Verulam Hostel closes as a training school for forewomen at the end of this month and the courses, which are now to last a month will be held at Lower Woodside. The H.W.A.E.C. farm the land attached to Lower Woodside Hostel and the transport situation will be considerably eased. Boreham Wood Hostel closed early this month. Mrs. Curry, the Warden, has moved to New Park Farm and the volunteers have settled into their new hostels. We welcomed Mrs. Troman, a new County Organiser, in December. She is making her home in Essenden and will be working in the Barnet area of the County.

HOLLAND.—On Thursday, 16th December, the first proficiency test to be held in England on Pest Destruction took place. We congratulate M. Rollinson, W.L.A. 81883; M. Stamp, W.L.A. 80,607, both of Dormer House, Holbeach, and D. Burton, W.L.A., 87128, of Bank House, Gosburton, the successful candidates. Mr. H. Ashton, from the Ministry of Agriculture, was the examiner, assisted by Mr. F. Casswell and Mr. J. J. Wilson. On December 15th and 21st Christmas Auctions were held at Boston and Spalding in aid of the Benevolent Fund. Employers showed their appreciation by sending such gifts as a heifer, pigs, poultry, ducks, geese, fruit and vegetables, and L.G.s made lovely dolls and toys, and thanks to the wonderful services of the auctioneers, Mr. Rose and Mr. Mather, of Boston, and Mr. S. G. Kingston, of Spalding, nearly £100 was raised at each auction. Congratulations to girls at Holland House, Spalding, who raised £20 for the Red Cross Prisoners-of-War Fund by carol singing. Very happy parties have been held at the W.L.A. hostels, with songs, sketches, tableaux and Christmas trees. On Jan. 20th members of the L.A. living at Bank House, Gosberton, conducted the service at the Methodist Chapel, Gosberton. Thurza Hickman announced the hymns, Freda Dobson read the prayers, Mildred Hoyle read the lessons, Helen Gower played the piano and Lilian Hoyle preached the sermon.

HUNTS. CAMBS. & ELY.—Proficiency Tests in Field Work were held in Cambs. in Dec. when 14 passed, 3 with Distinction. Other Tests will be held in Hunts. (March 1st) and Isle of Ely (April). The Hunts. W.A.E.C. ran a very successful and interesting course at Buckden Towers in Dec. at which Land Army girls distinguished themselves. 3 gained credit passes and are now Leaders and 7 others gained an award. The hostels have been holding Christmas Parties or Dinners. At each W.L.A. Hostel in Cambs. the cook made a super cake and it was raffled for the Benevolent Fund. The total amount thus raised was £26 14s. Both Thorney Hostels had sumptious dinners at which L.A. and W.A.E.C. officials were the guests of honour. Dances followed in aid of the Benevolent Fund. Swynford entertained men of the Eight Army recently returned to this country; and at Wendy a member of the L.A. was Father Christmas. A feature of the celebrations in every case was the grateful thanks accorded to the Warden for her hard, untiring work. Miss K. Rowley and Miss M. Myatt (Wendy) also took part in a Nativity Play produced by the Rector at Croydon Church. A very generous offer was made to the L.A. girls in Cambridge by an anonymous donor who provided free seats for "The Toy Princess" at the Arts Theatre. Mrs. Gurrin, our indefatigable Organiser, rushed round to get together a contingent and the girls each sat between two wounded soldiers. Needless to say, they thoroughly enjoyed themselves; in addition, they were given free sweets and programmes! We learn from Mrs. Gurrin that the offer has been repeated and other lucky girls have benefited from this exceptional gift. 36 volunteers are now the proud wearers of the Four-Year Armlet.

W. KENT.—Our clubs have nearly all had New Year parties. The most notable perhaps were those run by Malling and Meopham. Malling Club in-

vited the girls from the local W.L.A. hostel and some men from the R.A.F. Meopham Club entertained 40 children between the ages of 6 and 9 to a lovely tea and games followed by a Christmas tree, each child leaving with two or three presents and a large apple. Two Proficiency Tests in Milking were held during December, and we have to congratulate the Misses L. Burslem, E. Allen, M. Skinner, C. S. Payne, P. E. Lamb, F. C. Dangerfield and F. Hallworth, on qualifying for their badges and certificates, and Miss H. White who passed with distinction and gained a special certificate as well as her badge. A splendid "Gift Sale and Indoor Fete" in aid of the Benevolent Fund was run by the Kent N.F.U. in Maidtsone on December 11th. The weather was not very kind, but in spite of snow and slush a procession of L.G's marched through the town led by the band of the Royal Marines, with two magnificent wagons of produce drawn by tractors bringing up the rear. In addition to this, the N.F.U. arranged a dance on Dec. 30th, which was a great success, the two together bringing in well over £1,000.

LANCS.—During December Lady Denman made her first visit to the L.A. in Lancs. This was made the occasion for the presentation of Four Year Armlets to Volunteers of longest service and we were very pleased to know that these were the first Scarlet Armlets which Lady Denman had presented. The Committee Members, Local Representatives and Volunteers much appreciated this opportunity of meeting the Honorary Director of the W.L.A. and of discussing their problems with her.

Congratulations to Mrs. Marsden, one of our Committee Members, upon raising £100 for the Benevolent Fund at a Farmers' Ball which she organised in Ulverston. This is the largest sum raised in Lancashire at a single function. Other dances have been held at Graithwaite, organised by the Women's Land Army and Women's Timber Corps (£50), by the Garstang Club (£25), Hest Bank and Carnforth (£5 10s.), Holker Hall (£4 12s. 6d.) and Parbold Club (£4 4s.). Lancaster Club made £5 at a Bring and Buy Sale and Woolton Club £1 15s. at a Christmas Party. New ideas for money raising have been given by P. O. Toole, 51097, who painted and sold Christmas Cards, E. Beswick, 74066 by the sale of brooches and P. Jacob, 70143 who raffled the toys of her childhood and raised £8 10s. Mrs. Jackson, (District Representative for Brindle and Chorley, also Magazine Representative and Hon. Treasurer of the Benevolent and Welfare Funds) has undergone a serious operation but her many friends will be glad to hear that she is progressing satisfactorily and hopes to return to us in a few months time.

LEICS. & RUT.—Lady Denman honoured us recently by a visit to Leicester where she met the Committee members and representatives and discussed with them the question of welfare among our volunteers. Much helpful advice was given. We welcome Mrs. Cunliffe who has taken up her duties as county organiser in addition to Miss Rankin and Miss Lea and she has already visited some of the hostels and hopes to make the acquaintance of the girls in her district before long. Many volunteers are spending their winter evenings in working at correspondence courses and we hope to get practical results of their studies when the proficiency tests take place. Christmas and New Year parties were held at many of the Hostels and most girls were able to enjoy the festive season either at home or in their billets, thanks to the farmers who arranged for them to have time off. Recruiting has been partially re-opened, but owing to the rapidly advancing Spring and the shortage of labour everyone will have to work her hardest if we are to have another bumper harvest and help to feed starving Europe when the second front is opened.

County Returns

County	Ben. £	F. s.	Total d.	Employed
Kent	5548	14	10	3955
Essex	613	11	1	3695
Surrey	1348	1	6	2333
York, W. R. ..	774	4	5	2299
Hants.	990	12	1	2181
Herts.	631	12	9	2105
Leics. 1803 / Rut. 278	1126	9	4	2081
E. Sussex ..	832	12	2	2019
Northants. ..	1512	13	10	1809
Bucks.	941	6	0	1788
Worcs.	1902	6	11	1786
Somerset ..	797	16	4	1750
Devon	773	18	11	1672
Warwicks. ..	2024	10	11	1668
Norfolk	1297	3	0	1584
W. Sussex ..	1714	15	3	1535
Wilts.	447	3	9	1502
Cheshire ..	1135	7	4	1436
Lancs.	564	6	8	1408
North'l'd ..	224	12	2	1383
Cornwall ..	184	7	4	1379
Notts.	292	3	9	1313
Berks.	1005	6	3	1198
Hunts. 303 / Cambs. 540 / Ely 340	595	1	1	1183
E. Suffolk ..	1049	13	3	1123
Oxon.	611	0	2	1079
Yorks. E. R. ..	118	8	9	1038
Salop	704	8	8	993
Beds.	520	18	5	973
Kesteven ..	457	14	8	905
Staffs.	299	13	2	768
Lindsey	535	3	10	708
Glam.	457	17	2	688
Monmouth ..	398	6	9	599
W. Suffolk ..	960	1	2	589
Flints.	313	15	3	583
Denbigh ..	276	14	0	566
N. Wales ..	818	15	1	543
Holland	541	6	7	526
Cams. & Cards...	386	4	4	352
Brec. & Rad. ..	173	3	5	296
Montgomery ..	196	8	5	211
Devon	773	18	11	Not rec'd.
Durham	233	2	11	,,
Cumbs. & West.	346	0	1	,,
Dorset	515	8	7	,,
Hereford ..	893	19	3	,,
London & Middx.	618	0	4	,,
Derbys.	633	10	4	,,
Pembroke ..	609	11	5	,,
I.O.W.	88	8	0	,,
Glos.	1458	12	11	,,
Yorks N.R. (see W.R. above)				,,
Timber Corps ..	551	14	7	.. 3967

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