

2630. Mrs Jackson

THE LAND GIRL



No. 10, Volume 7.

JANUARY, 1947

Price 3d.

APPEAL TO MILKERS

THE Land Army has not only done a great deal to solve our food problems, it has also led the way in more than one agricultural reform and perhaps the most important of these is the relief milking scheme.

Because cows must be milked every day, many milkers have worked seven days a week from time immemorial. Although the effect of this on the supply of milkers was obvious, no one did anything serious about it until the W.L.A. in East Sussex produced a scheme and proved that it worked. They attached an experienced milker to a group of six farms and sent her round to each of them one day a week so that the milker on that farm got a weekly day off. The rota moves forward one day each week so that every seven weeks every member of the unit (including the relief) gets both Saturday and Sunday off.

The scheme has been a great success. The main objection (that the cows wouldn't like being milked by a stranger) has proved false. The cows seem as pleased as everyone else and in some cases the milk yield has actually been higher on the relief milker's day.

There are now 15 units at work in East Sussex and the War Agricultural Executive Committee recently wrote to all farmers in the county asking if they wanted to take advantage of the scheme. 54 replied that they want to come in at once and 131 others are interested.

To fill this need, really good and experienced milkers are needed NOW. The wages are £3 and 15s. bonus a week, and overtime with two weeks' holiday a year. Any member of the Land Army from any county can apply by writing to her County Secretary.

This is a great opportunity. Those who are chosen for this work will have a good, well paid and interesting job—but more than that they will be part of a scheme, a new idea, which can do more than any persuasive words and promises to keep our workers on the land and our agriculture strong.

M.A.P.

FARMING IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN

It was summer. As we climbed slowly up the steep mountain path, the sun seemed to bake our backs even through our heavy haversacks, and as we toiled further upwards my thoughts went back to a quiet little English lane, where every day for six long years I had brought the cows in for milking every morning and afternoon. How different to my new surroundings now, far up in the north of Norway, where every precious little patch of grass was used however far one had to climb.

Shortly after the cease fire of the second world war, I managed to get my release from the W.L.A. Exactly six years after I had first travelled down to Wiltshire, a very frightened little Londoner out for the first time to meet the unexpected excitement of working on the land. After a great deal of trouble I managed to get my exit permit to come over to Norway, and in the Spring of 1946 I became a Norwegian citizen by marriage. My husband—a medical student—and I decided to take his summer vacation up in the north, and we rented a little "seter" far up in the mountains in the vicinity of Mosjoen.

Like all other farms in the north, or for that matter of the majority of Norway, it is much more a question of a fight against nature for existence, and to anyone who knows the difficulties of cultivating land, the always present fight against the weather, pests and difficulties of work and transport, it is like an ever increasing miracle to see how these vikings of the land manage to exist.

In this particular farm I am going to describe, one began by climbing up a steep little mountain path which wound up and up and took a normal person in summer when it was dry, half-an-hour to reach the main farm buildings. These were situated in a little plateau near the summit, where there was a long stretch of cultivable land. Here lived the farmer, his wife and family. There were also a few occasional workers, but they were mainly only there during the busy seasons of the summer, haymaking, harvesting and potato-lifting. The farm possessed about twenty head of cattle, a hundred or so fowls, a couple of horses and a few pigs and sheep. Higher up on the mountain slopes there was another little house or "seter", and close to that there was a milking shed. During the summer months the cows are let out on

the higher mountain slopes, where a dairy girl, or sometimes perhaps two girls live and look after the milking, make butter and cheese and make a daily delivery of all the dairy produce down to the main farm on the lower slopes. These higher slopes are usually a collection of small grass plateaus, where the cows can find sufficient pasture, and where it is possible to get enough hay for the feed during winter. From the lower farm a horse and sledge transport the produce down to the foot of the mountain where at specified times it is collected and taken to the nearest village or town. Round the farmhouse corn is planted and harvested, potatoes and other root crops are produced and the farmer manages to be completely self-dependent. For together with his own produce, and the food that he can gather off the mountain—e.g., berries and fish from the lake, he has all the essentials. The horses are small mountain horses, with thick bodies and strong short legs. The wagons are low and small, and during the winter in any case they are fitted with skis instead of wheels.

The cows find their food in the summer from the pasture, but during the winter they are fed on hay, corn and cellulosed paper! The latter was popular especially during the war, when paper, a product of importance here in Norway, was used for every conceivable thing. I laughed when I imagined our cows in Wiltshire eating paper and being satisfied! During the winter, of course, all activities are practically at a standstill. The cows are housed in a large cowshed in the main farm buildings and are milked and fed, the other animals are fed, but the main job is hauling and cutting timber, which is easy enough on sledges and skis. Naturally there is no produce sent out, for it is impossible to transport it down to the bottom of the mountain when the snow lies thick and skis are the only method of movement. So it is noticeable in such areas where there are only mountain farms that milk is very short, if not unobtainable, to the people that live in the towns and villages during the winter months.

As we travelled south at the end of our vacation through the farmlands outside Trondhiem, and so on south through the fruit orchards of Sognfjord and Hardanger, one began to feel more at home. The farms seemed more modern and once we reached Telemark we passed

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A typical example of a Norwegian mountain farm building showing hayloft and cowshed.

many very large and heavy producing farms with many heads of cattle and well organised pastures and cultivated land. But there again, as one took the boat and ferried across the fjords, high up on what looked like inaccessible heights one could see a little patch of green here and there, and a little house. There somehow or other one of these vikings of the land of the midnight sun managed to live and produce, and to fight the battle of nature.

It is strange, therefore, as we lay and tried to sleep in those long summer nights when there was no darkness, that I felt somehow a strange bond between what I had experienced and what all those hundreds of little farmers were experiencing every day. A bond which only those who have worked and fought on the land can understand, and for which I shall never regret a minute of it. I am very proud of my new Homeland, but I am prouder still of having been one of those hundred thousand green pullovers who have at last gained their long earned recognition, not only from the people of Britain themselves, but also from the people of the world.

Wilts..

Joan Rodahl (ex-20178).

January, 1947

ANGLO-BELGIAN CORRESPONDENCE

In September, we gave an address to which anyone who would like a correspondent in Belgium could write. Mr. Francis Van Dun of Antwerp now says that "the boys and girls from Belgium lucky enough to get a Women's Land Army Girl as a correspondent, have made so much publicity about it that now, day by day, applications are coming in by the tens, all for a W.L.A. pen-pal". He hopes very much that many more members of the W.L.A. will write to him so that he will not have to disappoint "many a young man and woman, who are eagerly awaiting the day they receive an address from me". The address is 9, Van Peenestreet, Antwerp, Belgium. It is advisable to enclose an International Reply Coupon (6d.), postmarked at the office of issue.

WINTER COMPETITION

Have you sent in your entry to the Editor? Remember February 1st is the closing date.

Mangolds keep better than turnips or swedes. They are therefore invaluable as the root part of a ration in March or April.

MILK RECORDER'S DAY

The recording "day" begins in the afternoon. Accordingly, just before 2 p.m. I gather together various forms, my tattooing set and overall coat, jump on my motor-bike and sail off on the eight-mile journey to the farm at which I am to record.

On arrival, having bumped down a long and stony lane to the detriment of my tyres and certain portions of my anatomy—I find that not only have the farmer and his wife gone to market and not yet returned, but they have left the Milk Records Register locked up indoors. I employ certain phrases known to all Milk Recorders and make the best of it by sitting on a milker's stool in the dairy doing what I can with the weighing sheets hung up there.

The dairyman pokes his nose round the door. "Good afternoon, Miss. Soon as I heard your old bike coming down the lane I knew who it was." I greet him, ask after the cows, the wife and the baby—in that order—yarn for a few minutes and he goes off to fetch the herd. Meanwhile the farmer has returned, so off I go indoors to collect the Register (with a protest about its being unobtainable on my arrival), have a cup of tea and a chat about the shortage of cake, difficulties of labour or any other topical subject, and then out again to the milking sheds where the business is about to begin.

This being one of the herds where butterfat samples are to be taken, I borrow a churn and stand my box of sample bottles on it near the scales. Unfortunately the nearest cow has a nasty habit of coughing . . . ! I move a little farther away.

Milking proceeds as usual, the same jokes and comments being trotted out at my every visit—part of my job being to provide at least one new joke to add to the collection.

About 5 p.m., the cows being turned out, I reverse the journey and find myself back at home for tea, what there is of it, as Recorders only qualify for the nine-ounce bread ration.

Tea and a wash and then down to work. Forms to make out, weighing sheets to be checked and figures added up—who'd be a Recorder? In the middle of it all, one of my "clientele" calls and asks me to get him the previous record of a cow he has just bought. I promise to contact our Branch Office about the matter and he departs. More

figures—then supper and bed before 10 p.m.

* * * *

My alarm clock wakes me as the church clock strikes five. I stagger out of bed, eyes still shut, grope my way downstairs and light the primus, gradually getting used to the idea that another day has started. A cup of tea—blessed awakener! Then I don several coats, scarves and at least two pairs of gloves and manoeuvre my bike out of the shed and down the garden path on to the road. It is very chilly and raining persistently but the bike starts at once, thank goodness, my lights are good and I am soon away.

At the farm, the cows are just in, the buckets are being carried up the shed and the whole process starts again. I shiver and stamp—an early morning ride is cold at any time of the year. Not till milking is over do I get warm, when I earmark four new heifers which have calved-in recently. One is very troublesome, but after due exertions and imprecations have been used, she has to come to it like the others.

I pack up my belongings, lock up the sample box and remind the dairyman to put it on the milk lorry, say goodbye for another six weeks and off I go up the long and stony lane. Thank heavens it is only once in six weeks I go there—it's a wonder that the bike stands up to it at all.

I get back home about 9 a.m. Breakfast is accompanied by a large package of instructions, forms and other paraphernalia from the Office, some to be attended to at once, some for later consideration. There is my daily report on the farm I have just visited to be finished and sent off to the Branch Office, a weekly report to be compiled and forms to be kept up to date. All this takes up a good time and I think of the remark invariably made by the garage man when I stop for petrol. "Some people have got good jobs—nothing to do but ride about on a motor bike all day!"

Wilts.

R. Clayton Barker, 22658.

We offer our warm congratulations to the following members of the W.L.A. whose names appear in the New Year Honours List as receiving the B.E.M.:—Miss M. Butler, Berks., Miss G. M. Gray, Beds., Miss B. Holmes, Lanes., Miss I. C. Mackenzie, Scotland, and Miss N. Rowland, E. Suffolk.

STAR TURN NO. 15



Devon are rightly proud of Mrs. Howard, of Horrabridge, Yelverton, whose picture you see above. Mrs. Howard has been a Committee Member and District Representative for the Yelverton/Tavistock area since 1939, and is now Vice-Chairman of the Devon Committee. During that time she has had a large number of Land Army members under her care, with as many as sixty-five to visit each month during the 1942/45 peak period of the W.L.A. No one was ever missed, and many of those who remember her familiar figure will be glad to read this tribute to her hard work, untiring effort and loyalty. Farmers and Land Girls alike trusted, and still trust, her fair judgment of any difficulty.

Mrs. Howard is one who believes in making the contract between farmer and Land Girl clear from the word "go". So keen is she on this that she once, at a District Representatives' meeting, gave a demonstration on how to carry out a farm inspection!

As well as her Land Army work Mrs. Howard's name has been a household word among the farming community in Devon, in that from June, 1939, to February, 1946, she ran a large and successful Volunteer Labour Gang containing a cross section of the community and numbering from eighty to ninety. They included retired farmers, young people waiting to be called up, and

women of all ages and descriptions from sixty years downwards. Her gang were as famous as Mrs. Howard herself, for they coped with the day to day work of 400 farms in the Tavistock area. Mrs. Howard did all the bookings, and her average telephone calls were seventeen each evening. Transport was first done by private cars, but when the W.A.C. realised that this was a brilliant piece of organisation some Committee vehicles were put at her disposal.

Mrs. Howard is also the breeder of the famous gelding "Legend", which, ridden by her grand-child, has swept the board at all the big and important shows this year, including the White City in London.

The Devon W.L.A. sincerely hope Mrs. Howard will be with them until the Land Army has finished its work and is finally wound-up.

DIVERGING . . .

You never sought
This river walk,
Nor culled with me
My harmony
Of well-clipt Friesian.

Nor ever I
Saw heroes die.
And schooled my brain
To meet again
Their tortured reason.

Along our path
No mutual laugh,
Yet I discern
In your return
My harvest season.

Yorks., E.R.

J. Berry, 28105.

"The Cow Herself", Leaflet No. 1 in a series issued by The Silcock Advisory Service on Making the Dairy Herd Pay, gives a very interesting and concise description of the points which go to make a good Dairy Cow. There is also a short paragraph on the influence of the Bull in a herd where replacements are bred. Although the majority of Land Girls have no real need for knowing whether or not a cow would pay for herself, the leaflet would be most interesting to anyone who is anxious to learn as much about the Dairy Cow as possible.

J.W.

This month's cover design is by Anthea Shelmerdine, 36469, Salop.

HEDGEHOGS

Years ago I had a ground floor flat in a very old house with a big garden. It was a very picturesque house and I was envied for being so lucky as to live in it, yet it possessed a good many drawbacks. For instance, in the warm season, beetles and ants used my kitchen as a meeting place. In vain I tried to get rid of them; all remedies proved ineffective. I was told a hedgehog would clear them out and I decided at last to avail myself of the help of that animal.

Often while walking through woods and meadows I had come across them; now that I wanted one there was no trace of any. Spring turned into summer—still I could not find a hedgehog.

Autumn storms tore the last remaining leaves from the trees, beetles and ants retired in their winter quarters and I gave up the idea of a hedgehog. One day when I walked on a mat of golden and brown beech leaves under the naked trees a kind of rustling noise attracted my attention and I beheld a very big hedgehog shuffling along on some business. He took no notice of me until I tried to touch him, when he turned himself into a pincushion. Having no more unpleasant visitors in the kitchen I had no need for the hedgehog, but as he had crossed my path I decided to take him home. As I usually provide myself with a satchel wherein to put specimens of nature, it was an easy matter.

Before I released him I put some milk in a saucer and raw meat on the kitchen floor. Shortly afterwards he unrolled himself and made a hearty meal; after which he proceeded to investigate the kitchen.

It was getting late. I provided a box for him with a layer of cotton wool, put him to bed and turned the light off.

This night a sound like muffled drums woke me up. It grew louder: somebody was beating discords on an empty tin. No doubt the nocturnal concert originated in the kitchen.

Hector—that was the name I thought suitable for the hedgehog—had managed to get into a big tin bowl for boiling washing and ran happily round and round. I picked him up, put him back in his bed and removed the bowl on to a high shelf.

After a while there was another noise going on in the kitchen. Either Hector was dancing the Hornpipe or demolishing furniture. But I was too lazy to get up again.

In the morning there was no sign of Hector. His bed was empty, doors and windows shut. Bewildered I searched the kitchen all over. I found him in the end in the bottom drawer of the shut dresser! Hector had managed to squeeze through two slightly loose boards at the back and here he was between boot polish and brushes.

He was evicted from his cosy new quarters and I nailed the boards together; yet the next morning I found him there again after he had spent the whole night working hard to get the boards asunder. I decided to let him have the drawer; after all it was a sensible choice; he was out of everybody's way during the day. Unfortunately I forgot to warn my charwoman, who, on a dark morning, groping for the shoe brush, did not appreciate getting hold of a hedgehog instead.

Hector slept all day regardless of whatsoever happened in the kitchen and undisturbed by demands for shoe brushes and polish.

At dusk he got lively and after he finished his big meal was picked up and put on my lap, where he sniffed me in a friendly way and watched me with his jet black eyes. His grey underfur, soft and silky, improved daily in texture and lustre. After a few minutes I let him go on his rounds.

What he found to do I don't know, but he was always very busy through the night and his feet, large in comparison with his tiny body, went on with their tap, tap, tap. I found out that he could climb and jump down from a dresser nearly ten times his height.

One day I saw in the windows of a "pet" shop a small hedgehog and was told it was a female. Thinking that a mate would increase Hector's happiness I bought her and christened her Andromeda. She was a sweet little thing with khaki coloured underfur. Unfortunately Hector did not like Andromeda. Perhaps she was not his type or perhaps he was a confirmed bachelor. He tried to bite her and chased her all round at first until the poor creature found refuge under the dresser where Hector could not follow her because he was too fat. I put a lot of food down, so much that Hector could not manage to eat it all up and little Andromeda shyly finished it. Yet after a few days they got used to each other and fed at the same time and sat together on my lap. It is difficult to nurse a hedgehog unless you scratch its belly which seemed to be agreeable to Andromeda while Hector

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did not care much for it. Andromeda, like Hector, was very busy at night and occasional guests would not believe that the uncanny commotion in the kitchen was only caused by a pair of harmless hedgehogs.

Andromeda grew and gained weight and after a few weeks was bigger than Hector and began to display signs of a tyrannical nature. Now it was her turn to feed first and to allow Hector the dregs only; to bite and chase him. I strongly suspected Andromeda was not a female at all. No wonder Hector had not liked its mate. It was obvious the kitchen was too small for two male hedgehogs—besides my charwoman complained of the smell. In fact, although I cleared up after the animals early in the morning before she came, there hovered an odour alien to a well kept kitchen.

I waited for a mild spring evening to set them free. I carried them to a big tree at the top of the garden and put them down on the turf between its roots.

Without hesitation Hector turned to the right and Andromeda to the left and both disappeared amongst the bushes.

For a few days I left milk and meat at the kitchen door. They never came again.

Another year I discovered in a spinney in the garden an amazing little creature. It was half the size of my hand, pink all over, its eyes closed, a face like a miniature pig and with long, soft grey bristles on its back, in tufts apart like on a lady's hairbrush. It was a baby hedgehog. I left it where it was, but never saw it again.

Had Andromeda after all been a female? How else could Hector and Andromeda have procured marriage partners? Undoubtedly they had founded a dynasty of hedgehogs who lived in the garden happily ever after, doing useful work because the kitchen was never again a playing field for the insect world.

Francesca Enns.

ARE YOU A MILKER? SEE PAGE 1.

Congratulations to E. Squibb, 64697, Dorset, who lost her right arm as the result of an accident whilst serving in the W.L.A. and is now training as a typist and book-keeper. The Principal of her Training School says "She seems to have quite a flair for writing and shows unusual ability".

And to Y. Fussell, 143085, Dorset, whose picture "Weymouth Bay in a Storm" has been accepted for the Exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists which opened in the Suffolk Gallery, London, on Dec. 2nd.

And to J. Grimsey, 57848, Hunts., on winning a silver cup for singing.

And to Forest Hall Hostel, Northumberland, for celebrating Christmas by entertaining the poor children of the district to a party complete with Santa Claus and Christmas gifts.

A Novel Sandwich Filling

Liver cooked until crisp and pounded with a little fat, then mixed with chopped onion and watercress makes a splendid filling for sandwiches. With this filling, the bread need not be spread with margarine or other fat.

(From "Home and Country")

WOMEN HOUSING MANAGERS

Rent, collecting, maintenance of property, applications and tenancies, re-housing and slum clearance are some of the many branches of the work of a woman housing manager.

Salaries range from £225 per annum to £325 and sometimes over, exclusive of cost of living bonus and overtime.

For particulars of the comprehensive training course arranged for candidates, write to the Secretary of the Society of Women Housing Managers, 13, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.



Who said boo?

(Sent in by N. Orris, 125627, Essex)

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CIDER MAKING IN WEST DORSET

The process of making cider is maintained on many farms in West Dorset as it was centuries ago. It is as ancient and is performed with as much traditional ceremony as the wine-making of Biblical days.

The apples have been gathered in the two mellow months of October and November and when they are brought to the cider cellar are over-ripe and runny. The atmosphere is sweet and sickly, tinged with the acrid smell of the men's pipes; it is usually dark because a wet day is chosen when work out of doors is impossible. The apples are tipped, bucketful by bucketful, into the grinder—a machine with two metal ribbed rollers which crush the apples as the handles are turned by a man and a boy. The master of ceremonies "puts up the cheese", he builds a beautiful square cake on the press bed. He does this by binding it together with layers of straw laid crossways on the pulp and folding it over each layer.

As the cheese goes up the juice runs out on the bed and down into the tub from where it is ladled into a barrel through a sieve. When the cheese is

high enough, the grinding ceases and the great press which is made of a huge old beam, is screwed down and the cider gushes out into the tub. The grinder is then taken to pieces and washed ready for the next time.

The next day the cider maker raises the screws, shears off the sides of the cheese with a hay knife and puts what he has cut off on the top and screws down again. He does this twice on the second or sometimes third day and screws it down tighter every now and then. By the third or fourth day all the juice has run out leaving the pulp and straw quite dry—this is called pumice and cows love it.

Just at first the cider is a harmless syrupy drink—pure apple juice—but after the fourth day it starts working or fermenting and all the impurities come to the top and are skimmed off. At this stage it is sometimes used to drench a sick cow or horse but it is inadvisable for any human to drink it.

This is the birth of the refreshing cider which cools our parched throats in the heat of hay-making and harvesting and soothes the irritation from dust at threshing time.

Dorset. Primrose Macausland, 46949.



Doreen Parkyn, 94341, Herts., who sent us this photograph, says "I'm the blonde!"

THE LAND GIRL

Miss Baxter and I, by Isobel Mount. Order from "The Land Girl", 6, Chesham Street, London, S.W.1. Price 2/9 post free.

I cannot claim to have been present at the birth of Miss Baxter but I encountered her at a very early stage in life. I clearly remember a late afternoon at Balcombe where the Headquarters of the Land Army was housed during the war, when the Editor emerged from a welter of dubious contributions to *The Land Girl* with a manuscript firmly grasped between finger and thumb. "Have a look at this, will you" she said, "and tell me what you think of it". Ordinarily I should have taken warning from the studiously casual tone but it had been a long day and all unsuspecting I began to read . . .

Well, when I had got my breath again and we had fetched our sponges and mopped up the drink of cold water that the Editor had brought to pull me round, I said this was madly funny but who was Isobel Mount anyhow? And the Editor said goodness only knew but was she perhaps a grand person on *Punch* disguised as a land girl? And I said perhaps she was, or was it perhaps not funny at all but only us. And the Editor said that might be it and we had better read it to the rest of the administrative staff after supper and see. So we did but it wasn't only us and we had to fetch our sponges again.

That was how I first met and came to love Miss Baxter. Since then I have always turned more eagerly to my new number of *The Land Girl* when I knew that it contained "another Miss Baxter". Now here is Miss Baxter making her bow to the public and reading her afresh, all the episodes from one to twelve, I am delighted to find how uncommonly well she wears and that she is every bit as enlivening during the somewhat dreary days of peace as ever she was in the dark war years. In the nature of things her sallies must always have a special appeal for the Land Army, but I have seen her reduce strong men, with no Land Army connections, to the state of silent shaking which in the strong, silent breed is recognised as a sign of joy uncontrollable.

As for her creator, Isobel Mount, I still feel she should be "a grand person on *Punch*" in spite of her seven years in the Land Army. But she can draw as well as write amusingly, and not least among the charms of "Miss Baxter and I" are the enchanting illustrations. I am told that grand people on "*Punch*" either

write or draw but not both. So perhaps Miss Mount is best where she is . . . and a blessing be on her pen and on her pencil.

I.M.J.

NATURE DIARY

Enthusiasm for nature watching is usually and understandably at its lowest just now, but the nature-lover who has the overwhelming advantage of living in the country can find something of deep and binding interest at all seasons.

The dawn of the year is usually marked by some signs of the first tentative steps towards the great awakening of spring. I most often find this among plants. There is always a tiny rosette of primrose leaves somewhere, or a shy blossoming of frail violets in some sheltered spot. Then for the industrious gardener there are the rewards of snow-drop and aconite and winter iris to cheat winter's spell. But of all plants there is none to beat the common gorse of heath and common for regularity of good cheer. It is one of the very few wild plants we have that may be expected to bloom in every month of the twelve and great patches of snow on the bushes do not discourage it.

Snow, of course, is the great transformer of the countryside. It lays an uncannily glowing mantle of unfamiliarity over everything and records for all to see the every movement of all creatures that are abroad. Tracking is an art and competence comes only with practice, but even the most cursory examination of the tracks in a small area reveals some unexpected surprises, for we are nearly always aware of only part of the wild life population of our district. Severe weather now is generally to be preferred to mild, for later setbacks adversely affect man and wild creature alike. As the old tag has it: "A January spring is good for nae thing".

Two birds seem most representative of this month. The starling is the lord of every village street now. He takes second place to the swifts and martins in summer, but now rules from every roof, keeping up his queer medley of sounds and mimicking for hours in obvious cheerfulness. Through woods, orchards and gardens alike pass family parties of tits, mostly blue or long-tailed, and their constant food-searching is accompanied by low calling to keep the younger birds from straying.

David Gunston.

MY STAY AT ASHTON WOLD

"For the Hospital, Ashton Wold" were the first words I heard as I arrived in Peterborough, spoken by a nurse, who hustled me off to a waiting ambulance. Gosh, I thought, where on earth am I going to? After what seemed like hours, we arrived. My first impression was one of awe. It looked so big and unfriendly by moonlight, but, oh what a welcome for us when we got inside. A hot drink and lots of handshakes—eight girls were already there and looked so much at home that I felt sure they had been there for days, but no; they had just arrived. When four more had come, we were taken to our rooms. Then to supper, during which we all agreed that we were going to like our new home.

By force of habit most of us were awake at 6.30 a.m.; when the night nurse came in she was surprised to see us up and dressed. When the bell went my room-mates and I had been round the grounds, the most marvellous I have ever seen. At breakfast the Matron came in to greet us and tell us the rules and regulations, the days were ours to do as we pleased, as long as we were in for meal time, and the most important item "Medicine Parade" which was the part of the day no one looked forward to with relish. By Wednesday we knew what every nook and corner looked like. There were some beautiful walks, especially through the woods, it was fun tramping through the fallen leaves.

The Matron and Staff were most kind and always thinking of some new way to entertain us. When the day came for us to leave it was rather sad parting from them but I have memories on which to look back, and I can say with pride to any of you who go to Ashton, "you are the luckiest girls on earth."

Herefords.

A. Harrison. 134448.

Romany Cottage, Silverlake, by Monica Hutchings. (Hodder & Stoughton. 8s. 6d.)

Did you enjoy "Chronicles of Church Farm"? Then you'll enjoy Monica Hutchings' second book too. It isn't about farm life this time, but her life in her small cottage outside Yeovil just before the war and in its early days. Her photographs are a fine example of what can be done with a very ordinary camera if there is a seeing eye behind it.

E. M. Barraud.

BENEVOLENT FUND

The total raised for the Benevolent Fund exceeds £321,200. This month's contributions include a further £100 from the sales of the NORTH WALES AREA Cookery Book. Over £115,000 has now been spent and of this grants and loans account for over £93,000. At the time of going to press over £3,000 has been spent on grants this month. The total number of grants made is now over 12,500.

Enthusiastic accounts are being received by Benevolent Fund Headquarters from girls who have been to the Convalescent Home at Ashton Wold. From these accounts it seems evident that anyone who goes to Ashton Wold can be certain of being welcomed into the homely atmosphere which prevails.

News has recently been received about an ex-volunteer who was assisted by the Benevolent Fund to set herself up in business with a small bookshop. It is now six months since the grant was made and the shop is doing wonderfully well, there having recently been a substantial increase in the weekly takings, partially due to Christmas sales. This ex-Land Army member has now launched out with several side lines, including the sale of printed notepaper and games. Congratulations are sent to her on her success. The Committee are always interested to hear from ex-members who have been assisted by the Fund with their civilian careers and welcome news from these girls.

Amongst those who have been assisted by the Fund during December is a girl who served four and a half years in the Land Army and who developed an illness which will prevent her from working for some time. She has spent a period in hospital but is now at home being nursed by her parents. She had heavy medical expenses and ambulance bills and the Benevolent Fund Committee has been able to aid her substantially with these and will give further help if necessary until she is completely cured.

An ex-member who worked in the Land Army for six years has been given a substantial grant to enable her to take a year's intensive training as a Hospital Almoner. She herself had saved enough for the fees but needed help with living expenses.

Stored pears will have their true flavour brought out if they are placed in a warm atmosphere twenty-four hours before using.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From a letter to the Somerset County Secretary.

I've been a very happy land girl Miss Manley and will take with me into the future many happy and good memories of my experiences on the land, and I feel I can honestly say that it has been the happiest five years of my life. There is so much to learn and acquire in the quiet contented toil of the land. It certainly has been a grand experience for me.

Somerset.

R. Osborne, 60170.

Dear Editor,

I shall complete six years in the W.L.A. in April, 1947 and have been on the same farm for nearly five years. I am tractor driver and shepherd and am very happy in my work. I enclose a photograph of myself taken with some of my lambs last season. I am afraid it is not very seasonable at the moment.

I look forward to the LAND GIRL every month as I find it very interesting to hear about the work and experiences of other volunteers.

Warwickshire.

A. R. Leadley, 41832.



The writer of this letter spent six months at Wisley before going to Swanley for a horticultural training.

I have enjoyed the six months spent at the R.H.S. Gardens at Wisley and learned a good deal. There were six of us (four of us Land Army) and we lived together at an R.H.S. hostel.

The Vegetable Trial Grounds covered about six acres. When we started in March our work was mainly digging, buck hoeing, treading and raking and preparing the ground for sowing. We also turned three large compost heaps.

The crops grown were onions, leeks, carrots, beetroot, peas, beans, parsnips, salsify, chicory, marrows, cucumbers, melons, lettuce, tomatoes, cornsalad and celery. About two acres were planted out with brassicas. Most of the seed was American Lease-Lend but there were also new varieties sent in by British firms.

We were able to attend lectures at the R.H.S. Laboratory (given to the ex-service men taking a year's course at Wisley), on botany, chemistry and landscape gardening and we were allowed to take the chemistry exam, set by the Ministry of Agriculture lecturer. The Land Army did quite well. Twenty-two men entered and three W.L.A. members—one land girl came third and two tied sixth. We were rather pleased with the results.

We also went on some of the expeditions organised for the ex-service men to large market gardens, and all those who had attended the landscape gardening lectures spent an afternoon at Stoke Poges at the memorial gardens.

We had a most interesting six months at Wisley and were sorry to leave, although we are looking forward to our year at Swanley. Four of us are going from Wisley.

E. Sussex.

E. F. E. Horder, 53317.

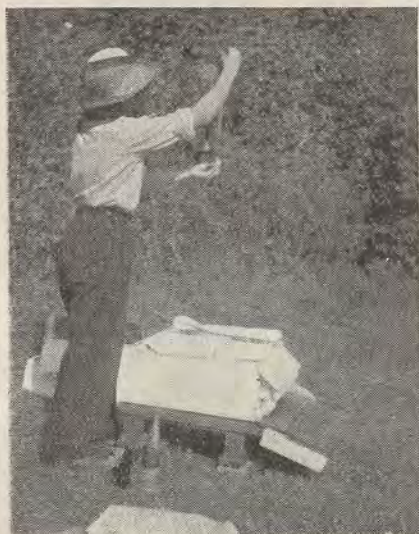
Dear Editor,

I find A. M. Coats' articles on beekeeping most interesting as I too, after 6½ years in the W.L.A., have become a beekeeper. Beekeeping has always been one of my minor ambitions and when my husband was demobbed last spring we bought a hive and a fairly strong stock and despite the worst summer for years we managed to take 25 lbs. of honey at the end of the season. After taking it, we added a section rack for heather honey as we live in a heather district, but we were unlucky, for it rained every day while the heather was in bloom and at

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the end of the month we took it off—empty!

Well, I find even after a full season, I am only just touching the fringes of the art of beekeeping. Firstly one must not expect it to be all honey, one must look



after one's bees, understand their habits and anticipate their requirements, learn to handle them confidently and always keep a watch for the small signs that tell you all is going well. On an average there is only one year in five which is a good honey year in the British Isles. But apart from the honey, beekeeping itself is a most fascinating hobby.

Hants. M. Foxwell (ex-L.A., 5680).

I hear that most of the work of the Honey Bee is done in a state of intoxication

(With apologies to Dr. Watts)

How doth the little dizzy Bee
At daybreak's twilight hour,
Lurching along unsteadily,
Betake him to his bower.

His hat's askew upon his head,
He hiccoughs as he goes,
Potations strong have coloured red
His dissipated nose.

And yet how wonderful it is
That in this shocking plight,
Such complicated work as his,
He manages all right!

H. G. Buisseret.

BOOK NOTES

The Hooded Hawk. D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. 12s. 6d.)

The Blue Danube. Ludwig Bemelmans. (Hamilton. 8s. 6d.)

The sub-title of "The Hooded Hawk" is "The Case of Mr. Boswell", and the author's main object is to explode the idea, fostered by Macaulay and other Victorian writers, that the author of "The Life of Samuel Johnson", the greatest biography in the English language, perhaps in any language, was a contemptible dolt and sot who produced a masterpiece by accident. In this he is quite successful and may, one hopes, have said the last word on the subject. Masterpieces do not happen by accident. Indeed, Mr. Lewis might have stressed more the fine intellectual qualities that went to the making of the "Life" as well as the virtues of kindness, loyalty and open-mindedness that he sets against Boswell's too notorious weaknesses. Apart from all this, Boswell is himself a splendid subject for biography. There were few aspects of the lively, squalid, cultured society of his day, so alarming in its violent contrasts and intense vitality, that he did not touch. He knew—sometimes almost by main force—all the great figures of the time; he dissipated with Wilkes and the Hell-fire Club; he talked religion with Johnson; he ran about between London and his remote Scottish estate; he made the Grand Tour and lived with rebels in Corsica. He was always in and out of love and yet (as times went) was a good husband and father. He was always seeing the highest and choosing the lowest; a melancholic who was popular for his gaiety and high spirits; in fact, an epitome of human nature, and articulate into the bargain. It was the articulateness that the Victorians objected to—people may do such things, they shouldn't talk about them. In short, this is an excellent introduction for anyone unfamiliar with the high point of our civilisation in the eighteenth century, while those already familiar with it will find new and precious facts to fit into their picture.

In the Danube, just by the old town of Regensburg, was a little island inhabited by four people, an old man, Anton, his two sisters and their young niece, who lived meagrely but peacefully by growing radishes and selling them to the townsfolk. They were peaceful, even in war-time, because, officially, they didn't exist, having been found unclassifiable by the local officials. But Anton was trapped into speaking his mind to a Gauleiter, and the battle started—simple cunning plus the help of a paternal bishop against the resources of the Nazi régime. "The Blue Danube" is a beautifully written little story, pathetic without sentimentality, even the horrors made bearable by a pervading gentleness of tone.

M. Jaeger.

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SCOTTISH NOTES

Another difficult and strenuous year has closed and members of the Scottish Women's Land Army can look back once again with satisfaction at work well and truly done. Anxious days, however, still lie ahead of us, and much depends on the continued loyalty and co-operation of our Land Girls to fill the Nation's food cupboards. It is with every confidence that we look forward to all Scottish Land Girls continuing their fine record of service through 1947, and to wish one and all a rich guide and happy New Year.

MIDLOTHIAN.—There was a celebration at Airybank hostel recently when two long service members, Mary McLaren and Betty Brown attained their twenty-first birthdays in the same week.

The double event was marked by a party supper followed by a dance. Parents and boy friends came to the happy gathering at which Mrs. Wood, the Warden, was hostess.

HOTEL CLOSSES.—The W.L.A. Hostel at Midfield, Lasswade, is now closed and the girls have been transferred to Airybank and Glencorse Hostels. The mansion house of Midfield at its inauguration in 1940 had 68 girls, but the numbers have been gradually depleted. Miss Hilda Irvine, one of the W.L.A. girls who has been at Midfield since its opening, presided at a farewell gathering, at which presentations were made to Mrs. J. C. W. Mann, the district representative of the Hostel, Miss Brockie, the Warden, and Miss Lynch, the cook.

PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS

The cost of advertisements in this column is 2d. a word.

WANTED.—Navy cardigan, bust 34, No coupons, Hunt, Corton Denham, Sherborne, Dorset.

WANTED.—Small hand churn, wood or glass, to make up to 6 lbs., in perfect condition. Mrs. Clifton-Brown, Burnham Grove, Burnham, Bucks.

WANTED URGENTLY.—Pair tap shoes, size 4, 51416, 8, Lynch, Winscombe, Somerset.

WANTED.—Ladies ice skates. Boots attached. Size 4. Lambert, Common Farm, Hucknall, Notts.

FOR SALE.—Ladies tailored breeches, waist 26-28, inside leg to knee 11½, calf 12. As new. £3. Ladies black tailored costume, hips 38. As new. Cost £13, what offers? Woman's yellow belted coat, size 8. As new. £3. Ladies green and brown silk dress. S.W. £2 10s. Shenton, 1, Hockley Street, Birmingham.

FOR SALE.—Clover pure wool blouse, £2 8s. also lilac satin blouse, 36s., both long sleeves and stock size. L. Stanger, S. Luffenham, Rutland.

FOR SALE.—Pair black riding boots, 7, 10s. Also 3 pairs court shoes, 7. Miss Wadling, Low Street, Northallerton.

"VAR ETY IN COOKING".—Price 1s. 8d. each, including postage. From W.L.A. Office, Bron Castell Annexe, Bangor, North Wales.

COUNTY NEWS

LONDON AND MIDD.—We had a happy meeting of our long service volunteers at the Women's Services Club for tea on Saturday, 14th Dec. Lady Listowel presented G.S. Awards and we all went to the Victoria Palace. Our Hampton girls have held a successful bazaar which has raised £27 11s. 4d. for our Welfare Fund. This was an excellent effort on the part of so few girls. We are most grateful also for other contributions to our Welfare Fund recently.

MON.—There has been the usual festive round of parties and dances in our hostels. Mount Ballen hostel although threatened with a major disaster when its Christmas dinner of several chickens vanished at night, rallied round and the girls had their Christmas dinner as usual. On Jan. 28th a grand dance in aid of the Benevolent Fund will be held at D'nham. Four girls at Fields Park made all the decorations for their hostel party. This hostel recently held a dance which realised £15 for the Benevolent Fund. Llanishen is holding its annual fancy dress ball, and Llanvapley Court has a dance planned, the proceeds in each case to go to the Benevolent Fund. The girls of Ynys Haf-d gave a party at the hostel for the Monmouth Children's Home. The children were brought from Monmouth by bus and were each presented with a gift from the Christmas Tree. A sumptuous tea was followed by games in which the L.G.'s took part and when the time came to leave, each child received a bag of sweets and an orange. This was a very nice gesture on the girls' part and we feel sure that they have been amply rewarded for their generosity.

NORFOLK.—A very successful Handicraft Exhibition was held at the Lads' Club, Norwich by kind permission of the Chief Constable on Saturday, Nov. 30th. The Hon. Mrs. Herbert, wife of the Bishop of Norwich, performed the opening ceremony and gave a talk that was both inspiring and heartening. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Norwich, and the Sheriff and Mrs. Boddy were also present. The work shown was of a high standard; amongst the exhibits were

a baby's cot, the whole of which had been made by a land girl, and a beautifully decorated Christmas tree. The Gift stall did a great trade and the County Welfare Fund has benefited much from the proceeds. Tea was served through the kindness of the Norfolk W.V.S. organised by Mrs. Darbyshire-Bowles. Six-year armlets were presented by the Lord Mayor to H. Spratt, 6475, Mrs. Kett, 36119, and E. Jacobs, 31898. An "At Home" will be held in the Assembly Rooms of the Guildhall, King's Lynn, on Saturday, Jan. 25th. A special speaker is being invited and it is hoped that the members from the Shooting Box hostel will perform a play. Tea is also being provided. Three Norfolk volunteers have recently taken the Homecraft Training Course and have enormously enjoyed it; another member is going this month.

NORTH'D.—The Arts Council gave a Concert Tour in Nov. which was very much enjoyed. All hostels in the County will in future be managed by the W.L.A. The Y.W.C.A. have now given up this work which they did so well all through the war years. We are very pleased that Mrs. Hardy and Miss Waller are still continuing the work for the hostels and are now W.L.A. County Organisers. Great activity has been shown lately in adding to the Benevolent Fund total. Nedderton Hostel has sent in £30, Stamfordham Hostel £27, Haydon Bridge Hostel £18 and Stockfield a further £10. Florence Murray, 139686, got up a dance which brought £6 10s., and Mrs. Blackett Ord, Committee member, sent in £4 10s. from a dance in Whitfield. Susan Watson, 169455, is our first member to go to Ashton Wold Convalescent Home to get strong after her recent illness from diphtheria. Members in the Hexham Rural District please note that we plan to hold another Ball for the Benevolent Fund on Feb. 18th, 1947, in the Queens Hall, Hexham. Tickets will be 7s. 6d. to W.L.A. members and 10s. to everyone else.

NOTTS.—The County Office staff ran a Bring and Buy Sale at the Red House on Friday, Nov.

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29th, and raised a total of £137 10s. for the County Welfare Fund. The staff worked hard for this sale and were very pleased with the results. Several members of the L.A. sent donations and gifts to the sale and we would like to thank them. A Whist Drive held at the White Hart Hotel, Ollerton, on Dec. 11th, raised £9 5s. 9d. for the County Welfare Fund. Many of the hostels have been organising dances and whist drives to raise money for their Christmas parties. Health talks have been given in some hostels by Dr. Mary Collis and were very much enjoyed as the volunteers asked quite a number of questions.

The County Committee and District Representatives were delighted to welcome Mrs. Jenkins to the County at a meeting in Nottingham on Nov. 26th. We wish that she could come more often and visit the volunteers in Nottingham.

A Handicraft Competition is being arranged in the New Year and we are looking forward to many entries.

OXON.—A very successful Forewomen's Course was held at our new Hostel at Chesterton Lodge during the early days of November. As a result of this, a deeper appreciation and understanding of each other's particular contribution to Agriculture has been realised by Forewomen, County Office and W.A.E.C. We are grateful to the many friends who gave most helpful lectures and demonstrations, also to Mrs. Ebbles, Warden of the Hostel, for her generous hospitality. Our many winter activities have included dances in the Hostels arranged and provided by the County Welfare Fund; musical evenings, demonstrations arranged by Pears Ltd. (we did enjoy these!), Keep Fit classes and choir practices. The Goring Choir gave a very enjoyable Carol Service at the Countess of Huntingdon's Church at Goring. The County Carol Service, now an annual event, was held in the City Church on 15th Dec. where the choirs acquitted themselves well. It was a pleasure to have Miss Greaves, Secretary of the Benevolent Fund, to read the last Lesson. Diana Cook, 85030, recently received a practical appreciation from her employer for helping him to obtain his T.T. Certificate in the form of a substantial increase in pay.

SOM.—Congratulations to the winners of the sixty prizes in our Xmas Draw. As a result of this effort Miss Fleming hopes to send a substantial cheque to the Benevolent Fund. In spite of the fact that most of Somerset has been under water for some weeks, we hear news of successful dances and parties. Ditchat dance organised by Miss Paget-Taylor and a farmer in aid of the Benevolent Fund was a great success. Whitehall felt that their hostel was not big enough for their Xmas Party, so the Village Hall was hired and a very jolly evening was spent. Many hostels are preparing for the games contests being arranged by the County Organisers. Loxton dance resulted in a cheque for £24 being sent to the Benevolent Fund, a splendid achievement. Miss Abbot's film show was much enjoyed by farmers and volunteers in the Dulverton area. Many of the films, in colour, were made by Miss Abbot in South Africa, Kenya, and on Exmoor. A smocking class is proving very popular at Whitehall hostel.

STAFFS.—There have been Christmas dinners and parties in our hostels and attractive decorations have added to the gay atmosphere. Wardens and Staff have excelled in providing wonderful Christmas fare. Impromptu scenes and fancy dress parades showed great ingenuity and added to the hilarity of the parties. New recruits had mysteriously received instructions to report at one hostel during the evening—their suitability for Land Army work and the uniform provided was hardly in keeping with regulations. Messrs. Pears Ltd. kindly gave demonstrations of Beauty Culture in our hostels during Nov. These were greatly appreciated and helpful advice given. Mr. Haggard, film demonstrator, representing "Ovaltine", gave an interesting film show in three of our hostels during Dec. Scenes on the Ovaltine Farm, the manufacture of

Ovaltine, and samples of the finished product gave us a most enjoyable and instructive social evening. A Whist Drive arranged by Hazel Richards, 67481, was held at Comberford, Tamworth, on Nov. 7th —£7 was realized for the Benevolent Fund. Wall Heath Hostel held a small Dance on Nov. 16th, £5 being handed to the Benevolent Fund.

E. SUFFOLK.—We have just emerged from a successful Christmas Sale in aid of the Benevolent and Welfare Funds. This was held in our Uniform Department from Dec. 3rd to 7th, the front of this rather austere room being transformed as far as possible into a small, attractively decorated shop. Many of our volunteers, Reps. and members of hostel staffs made really lovely toys, children's frocks and other things suitable for Christmas presents, and also brought in produce, which was in great demand. We hope to be able to send £100 to Benevolent Fund and keep £100 for our own Welfare Fund as a result of the sale. We are starting Agricultural Quizzes both in our hostels and among our privately employed Landgirls. We hope by next spring to have a sufficiently good team to accept the challenge we have received from West Suffolk. Our Chairman, Lady Cranworth, has kindly promised a trophy to be competed for by our hostel L.G.'s. Begun in Nov., this competition takes the form of a three-monthly contest, the award going to the hostel with the highest average per head for work done during this period. Lady Cranworth has also offered a prize for the best individual six-monthly record for attendance.

Miss J. Oliver has recently started work as a County Organiser, and we hope that she will be happy with us.

WEST SUFFOLK were very glad to welcome Mrs. Jenkins on her first visit to the County. She really came to see the Homecraft Centre, but managed to find time to drop in at Lakenheath Hostel after supper one evening, much to the delight of the inmates. A Christmas Party took place at Bury St. Edmunds on Dec. 7th, for all the L.G.'s in the County and friends of the W.L.A. including landladies. The afternoon began with a presentation to Lady Briscoe on her retirement as Chairman, and then Mrs. Custerson presented crimson armlets to District Representatives, and good service badges to our long service volunteers. "The Variety Highlights" gave an excellent entertainment, and tea followed, with Father Christmas cutting a magnificent Christmas Cake made by Miss M. Lloyd. The semi-finals and finals of the Table Tennis Tournament wound up proceedings, and we congratulate Lakenheath on winning the silver.

We are sorry to lose our County Organiser Mrs. Miller, who is travelling shortly to the Far East, but glad to welcome Miss Plumpton in her place.

SURREY W.L.A. held a tea party and concert on Dec. 12th for 150 Long Service members, and Local Representatives. We all felt it a great honour that Mrs. Jenkins should present the books and certificates given by the County Committee. It is hoped that these will remind members, in years to come, of their service in the Land Army. Mrs. Jenkins laid stress on the fact that members had gained much from their service to the land, in the way of increased appreciation and knowledge of the beauty of nature—and great improvements of health and physique.

At this party a presentation was made to our County Secretary, Miss Sharp, who is resigning that position. For over 6 years Miss Sharp has given devoted service to the W.L.A. and we shall all sorely miss her capable guidance and she will indeed be a great loss to the County. Members of the Committee and Local Representatives joined in giving her a gold wrist watch in memory of our association together.

Congratulations to the following volunteers on gaining their Proficiency Test Badges in Milking and Dairy Work. L. Grogan, K. Hastings, J. Morton, B. Moore, E. Snow, H. Sharpe, M. Stolls, and F. M. Summerton.

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The Penrith L.A. Club has a membership of forty and is open every Saturday from 3 till 6. The delightful murals were painted by Miss Gower, our Cumberland Organiser.

E. SUSSEX.—It is with great regret that we hear of Mrs. Scott's resignation from the County Comm. Since the start of the L.A. she has been well known to many girls as Chairman of the Eastbourne and Hailsham District and she will be very much missed. The Benevolent Fund has gained financially through her efforts, and she has personally raised more money for the Fund than anyone else in E. Sussex.

Plans for the Exhibition are now nearly complete. We are delighted that the Duke of Norfolk has agreed to open the Exhibition on Feb. 17th. Over 350 entries have been received from E. Sussex Volunteers in the Handicrafts section. In the Drama and music section four plays and two variety acts will be judged by Miss Susan Richmond. Several choirs and soloists have entered for the singing which will be judged by Mrs. Lomas and Mrs. Bromly Martin. We hope that anyone who can get to Brighton between Feb. 17th and 22nd will visit our Exhibition. Profits are to go to the Benevolent Fund. Milking Proficiency Tests were held at Plumpton in Nov. All candidates passed: M. Haslett, 162566 92 per cent.; M. Rolfe, 79218 88 per cent.; E. Taft, 42097 82 per cent. D. Perry, 154000 and I. Humphreys, 117375 represented E. Sussex at the Lord Mayor's Show and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. D. Perry is one of our first Relief Milkers and I. Humphreys is at present doing a year's Course at Plumpton.

W. SUSSEX.—Two most successful concert tours were arranged by The Arts Council in Nov. and Dec. Both were greatly enjoyed by a large number of L.A. members at Hostels and Clubs. We have had a variety of talks at the Hostels which L.G.'s from the neighbourhood have also attended; talks on Holland by a speaker from the Royal Netherlands Embassy; on Health and Happiness; and talks and discussions on politics. A number of our members are busy preparing their entries for the Sussex W.L.A. Exhibition in Feb. Carol Parties

were held at three Hostels, where everyone sang with enthusiasm carols old and new conducted by Mrs. Rigg. They then enjoyed wonderful refreshments and felt the Christmas season had begun well. Clubs, including the newest one, Steyning, went Carol singing in aid of the Benevolent and Welfare Funds. West Sussex was very proud to be asked to send two representatives to take part in the parade of milkers in the Lord Mayor's Show. The Misses Bell and Connie Caldbeck, 6-year members from Ireland, whose three sisters have all been in the L.A., were chosen and greatly enjoyed the day.

N. WALES.—Our best wishes for a successful future in Agriculture to Rachel Williams, Freda Dale and Phoebe Jones who have completed their Course at the Plas Dinam Training College. Good wishes to E. Goude, 55315, who is attending the Y.F.C. Conference at Harlech and is speaking on "Youth and the Countryside". A Handicraft Competition for all volunteers is to be held in March and we are looking forward to a record number of entries. The first inspection of the Inter-Hostel Tidiness Competition has been completed and the total number of marks awarded each Hostel are very close indeed. Our Chairman, The Lady Kathleen Stanley, is to make the final inspection during March. A successful tour of the Hostels was made by the Arts Council of Great Britain and a most instructive and enjoyable Talk and Demonstration on Beauty Culture was given by representatives from Messrs. A. & F. Pears, Ltd.

WARWICKS.—Many of you will no doubt have read in the paper recently of how the Old Stratford Town Hall was burned down. A number of land girls in this county hold very happy associations of this place where Mrs. Fielden's 4 and 6 year armlet parties were held. At the last party which Mrs. Fielden gave there on Nov. 13th, Lady Northampton, who was herself a land girl, gave away the armlets. Two new hostels of the hut-

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ment type have been opened at Southam and Shipston-on-Stour. There have been a number of changes in our Wardens and we should particularly like to welcome Miss Swift, Mrs. Bray and Miss Coleman. It is hoped to start a new training scheme for new recruits to the L.A. at Whitehill Farm, Nr. Stratford-on-Avon, sometime in the New Year, but owing to supply difficulties the date cannot yet be definitely given.

WORCS.—We are very pleased to welcome Miss M. Quinlan, who has been appointed Assistant Secretary in place of Miss F. M. Davies. We wish her every success and hope she will be very happy with us. The County Office is now installed in its new quarters at Henwick Grove, just outside Worcester, the official address being W.L.A. Office, T.O.B. "C" Block, Henwick Grove, Worcester.

On Saturday, Dec. 14th, we held a most successful Christmas Fair in the Shirehall, the chief attractions being an illuminated Christmas Tree, with Father Christmas in attendance, a well patronised produce stall stocked with gifts from kind friends, numerous sideshows, and many stalls of toys and goods made entirely by L.G.'s. Congratulations to the members at Hurstmead Hostel, who were the winners of the Inter-Hostel Handicraft Competition, and whose stall made over £28. The Competition was judged by a W.I. Handicraft expert who commented on the very high standard of workmanship of all work submitted and awarded the winning team the record marking of 99 per cent. Congratulations also to the L.G.'s at Greenhill Hostel, who organised a very successful Dance in aid of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children and raised £12. B. Burchard, 49887, has been accepted for a 2 years' N.D.D. Course at Edinburgh Agricultural College, and S. Steffens, 39916, has been accepted for a 3 years' N.D.H. Course at Studley College.

YORKS., N. AND E.R.—A very successful Dance was organised on Nov. 29th in Gate Hemsley, when £21 3s. 6d. was raised for the Benevolent Fund by Paddy Fawcett and Muriel Thompson of Stockton House Hostel. Easingwold 1st a Whist Drive and Dance for the Benevolent Fund on Nov. 22nd, when £7 was raised. Scarborough Club re-opened with a Social Evening on Dec. 4th, when many past and present members of the W.L.A. attended. Kirbymoorside Club is having classes in glove making. A successful tour of the N. Riding Hostels was organised by the Arts Council, and performances given by Miss Therese Carroll and Miss Rowland were very much enjoyed by W.L.A. volunteers and friends from outside. It is proposed to organise another Handicraft Exhibition for both Ridings, to be held in York at the end of March. The Exhibition held last year was very successful and it is hoped that members will support it again in 1947.

YORKS. W.R.—It was with the deepest regret that the Committee members and staff of the County Office said goodbye to Mrs. Rogers at the beginning of October when she left the W.L.A. and Yorkshire to join her husband in the South. Mrs. Rogers had been with the W.L.A. since 1942, and only those who had worked with her have any conception of the tremendous amount of hard work she did to improve the working and leisure conditions of the volunteers and organise the smooth running of the office in this County. By Mrs. Rogers' resignation we have all lost a very staunch friend and colleague, and everyone in the County send their very best wishes for her future.

We were extremely fortunate to have a lovely crisp sunny day for the opening of Pollington—the largest W.L.A. Hostel in the country—on 4th Nov. The Hostel at present accommodates between 90 and 100 girls, but can house up to 130 and it is expected that this number might be reached in the Spring. We are pleased to welcome Miss Kenden as Warden and hope that she will be successful and happy with us. The Hostel was officially opened by Lady Binsley, who was introduced by Miss Beale and we were very happy and fortunate to have Miss Keith with us on the great day.

County Returns

County	Ben. F. Total £ s. d.			Em- ployed
Kent	9774	17	6	1521
Surrey	5534	0	7	1305
Essex	5647	18	6	1074
Herts	4782	9	2	972
Yorks, W. Riding	3527	15	4	929
Hants	8662	4	2	918
Northants ..	2886	0	5	866
Leics. & Rutland	2682	6	7	858
Bucks	4915	7	8	841
Warwickshire ..	7546	9	9	831
Devon	4142	7	6	788
Worcestershire ..	3100	0	0	717
Cornwall	1675	5	11	709
Yorks, E. and N. Riding	2901	19	2	705
West Sussex ..	5174	7	5	703
Bedfordshire ..	1070	16	6	672
Somerset	2761	3	1	670
Lincs, Lindsey & Kesteven	3274	3	0	644
East Sussex ..	4160	7	11	636
Norfolk	6301	4	6	627
Oxfordshire ..	3858	14	3	607
Gloucester	2706	1	2	607
Northumberland	2858	10	3	605
Hunts, Cambs & Ely	3746	16	7	594
Notts.	1847	3	10	541
Cheshire	3318	15	4	536
Berks	3556	10	8	509
Wilts	2072	17	3	493
Durham	2020	8	5	473
East Suffolk ..	3601	19	3	461
Staffs	1813	14	9	422
Glamorgan	1180	0	3	413
Cumb. & West'ld.	711	5	6	405
Salop	1954	3	11	395
Dorset	1471	13	5	394
Monmouth	1016	8	0	377
Hereford	1866	10	4	360
Lancashire	2840	8	11	335
Flintshire	708	3	6	327
Lincs, Holland ..	2075	2	0	325
North Wales Area	2028	14	2	311
West Suffolk ..	2161	7	0	309
Brecon, Radnor & Mont.	863	19	0	285
Denbigh	1209	16	11	261
Cards. & Carm's.	776	5	5	245
Derbyshire	1546	12	4	226
London & Middx.	1294	12	7	213
I.O.W.	295	15	2	173
Pembroke	1122	2	8	157

The total number of volunteers in employment on 18th December, 1946 was 28,345.

"THE LAND GIRL"
Published Mid-monthly

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