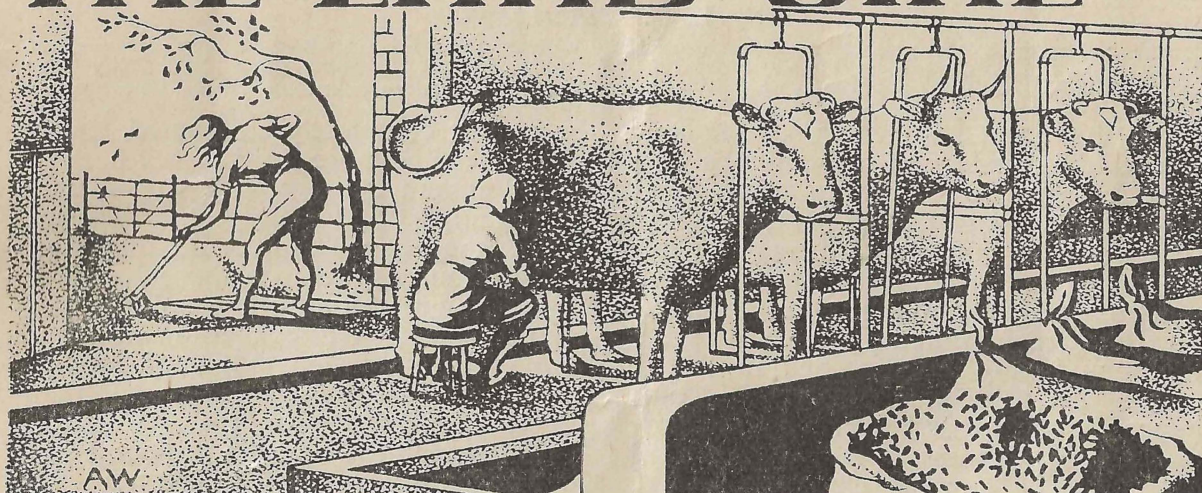


THE LAND GIRL



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HOPES AND PLANS

NEW YEAR can hardly fail to be a time for looking forward and without neglecting the many proverbial warnings about slipping cups and unhatched chickens, the dawn of 1944 brings with it a sunrise of hope.

The truth behind the old proverbs is that over-confidence leads to carelessness or relaxation of effort. You're so sure you've won you don't go on trying, and if it is a team affair perhaps you think that the others can manage now and afford to let you have a breathing space. Everyone knows what happens if enough of the team feel the same way about that.

But members of the W.L.A. can and will go on doing their job with undiminished vigour and spirit and yet think about what they will do after the war. Government training schemes and the Benevolent Fund may be able to help and it is important to find out *now* what volunteers themselves want to do. The LAND GIRL therefore offers prizes of 3 gns, 2 gns., and 1 gn. for the best essays on "What I should like to do after the war." 5s. will also be paid to any competitor who contributes an idea which can be published in the magazine.

There is no set limit of words, but entries should be as brief as ideas permit. Hopes and plans may be as ambitious as the writers like but must be practical—for instance, no marks will be given to a Land Girl who says she'd like to be Prime Minister and turn England into the Garden of Eden unless she also gives some outline of how she would get into Parliament and of the layout of the Garden of Eden. Nor need any competitor mind sending in less ambitious plans; if, for instance, she would like to marry a farm worker how would she manage her life and what amenities would she consider essential?

How many volunteers who used to live and work in towns have decided they must live in the country in future? And how many want to return to city lights at the earliest possible opportunity? Ideas on these and any other relevant points will be welcome.

Entries should be addressed to The Editor, LAND GIRL, Balcombe Place, Haywards Heath, Sussex, and must be received by March 1st, 1944. M.A.P.

WHY YOU ARE WINNING THE WAR

By L. F. Easterbrook.

The following is the first of a series of articles written for the LAND GIRL by authors well-known to all who work on the land. Sir George Stapledon, Mr. Anthony Hurd, Mr. Clyde Higgs and Mr. Robertson Scott are among those who have kindly promised to contribute to the series.

At the exact moment that the war started, the Ministry of Agriculture's war-time farming plan slid into place. As I was supposed to be the person responsible for explaining to farmers what this plan was and what it was all about, I was in a fairly good position to judge how it fitted in practice into a situation that could only be imagined in theory until Hitler took the plunge. My own impression was that it worked with quite amazing smoothness from the very word "Go." The County Committees met, the district and sub-committees were appointed, pretty well everyone seemed to know what to do, although not everyone knew exactly how to go about it. Since the plan aimed at no less than a revolution in British agriculture, at changing us almost overnight from a pastoral to an arable farming economy, and since it had to be conducted under almost the worst possible conditions, its success really has been a quite astonishing performance.

But there was one consideration that meant the conditions were not quite "the worst possible." That was that most of the people on the land realised from the start that it was 'up to them.' As early as the spring of 1940 I remember meeting a small fell farmer in Westmorland, miles from anywhere, scything a patch of rushes. He told me he was doing so in preparation for ploughing up another five acres for oats. "It's not much," he said, "but it will help lighten a ship." There was never any doubt about this small farmer, so remote from the world that groceries were probably delivered there only once a fortnight, knowing what his part was in the war, and there were thousands like him.

That was the spirit that brought about the miracle and caused agriculture to confound the prophets. For that is what it has done. Before the war actually began, I heard one agricultural expert after another explain how our output of home-grown food would be more likely to fall than rise if ever we were to have to turn over to wartime conditions. They would point out how we were dependent under normal conditions upon some 7 to 8 million tons a year of imported animal feeding stuffs for producing our milk, milk products, meat and eggs. They argued, quite correctly, that these would have to

be almost completely eliminated, and at the same time more food grown here for direct human consumption, (bread corn, for example, and potatoes). The net result, they concluded, could only be a reduced output, because those lost feeding stuffs represented in effect 'raw material' for our livestock to manufacture into food, and when they took into account such things as demands upon manpower under total war, inevitable shortage of equipment, and the state into which the industry had been allowed to fall, they seemed to have made out such a watertight case to prove their gloom that they became almost cheerful about it.

Well, you know the answer agriculture has given. Our output of food, instead of falling, has risen by 70 per cent. during the war. Our dairy herds to-day over-top even the pre-war record for numbers. The numbers of our beef cattle have remained very high, and we are producing more of our sugar than ever before in our history. In the last war, milk consumption fell in 1917 by over 30 per cent. In this war, farmers have met a demand that has been running as high as 40 per cent. above the greatest quantities of fresh milk ever drunk in our history. Against this, there has been a substantial fall in our sheep population and our pig herds and poultry flocks have been halved. But we are feeding ourselves for five days a week now instead of only three, and we are doing that from less land available for agriculture than has ever been known since records were kept. That is on account of the large areas we have had to give up for aerodromes, battle training grounds and other military purposes.

How have we managed it? Improved technical knowledge has had a good deal to do with it. We know much more than in the last war about such matters as defeating the wireworm on ploughed up old grassland, the use of phosphate fertilisers, and the management of the grassland we have left. Nor could we have done it without the very big increase in the use of farm machines that has occurred. All these things have helped. But none would have been any use without the self-reliance, the resourcefulness and the cheerful spirit of self-sacrifice that all working on the land have put into

their job. There isn't just one answer to how we have kept up the milk supplies. There are 140,000--or whatever the number of milk producers are. Each in his own way has had to scrape and plan and 'make do' and improvise to meet the thousand and one situations that arise in war-time, when the rations are cut; or the cowman falls ill the same day the only other man on the farm is called up; or the lorry breaks down and there's no one to mend it; or the extra cows arrive long before the forms come back permitting one to make accommodation for them. But somehow we 'make do' and call it a day, leaving to-morrow's troubles to look after themselves, and somehow we carry on with three men and a girl doing the work of a farm staff of five skilled men in peace time. We couldn't keep on forever like that. People are getting tired. There's only one thing we're quite certain about, and that is we can keep on longer than the enemy. That's why we are winning the war. That's why agriculture has far exceeded the rosiest expectations.

The Women's Land Army don't need any praise from me. We're long past that stage in the war. For the second time in hardly a quarter of a century they have won their spurs and now they can safely leave their reputation to history. So I'm not going to congratulate them on what I feel I should politely call their 'fortitude,' or on the quick way they have of picking up new jobs, or even on their remarkable prowess with some of the new farm machines. But there is one quality to which nearly every farmer refers who ever mentions them, and that is their "cheerfulness." Now it's not so terribly easy to turn out for milking at 5 a.m. these mornings with any semblance of enjoying it; nor, say, is root-lifting in a north-easter, with just that little film of ice on the leaves, a job calculated to make you roar with laughter and hope it never ends. And when that kind of thing goes on day after day, year after year; and when it may be happening on a 70-acre farm at the back of nowhere, where no one ever calls and one feels the war could hard'y miss *that* little farm if it gave up its war-work altogether--well, anyone who keeps her good spirits under such conditions, and "keeps on keeping on" with as much certainty that she is winning the war as on the first morning she donned the breeches and the green jersey, is second to none in the service she is giving her country. Like my friend in the Westmorland fells, she is "helping

to lighten a ship," and that's a key job in this war or any other war. "My girl's only a little slip of a thing," a Wiltshire farmer told me, "and how she tackles the jobs I give her, I don't know. But she does, and she's always got a smile. In this I think she sets a great example to the men. I know she does to me." The commanders and the great ones make their plans; the generals carry them out; famous armies and regiments do spectacular deeds that add fresh lustre to their fame. It all may seem so much more important than getting up to milk the cows at 5 a.m., or putting in that little bit extra when it would have been so much easier to have called it a day. Yet what did Mr. Hudson tell the harvest volunteers when he thanked them last October? "The extra corn and potatoes we grew this year," he said, "that extra little bit alone represented a saving of enough ships to transport overseas the vehicles, supplies, guns, ammunition and equipment for some eight or ten divisions."

So you see your little bit *did* matter. It had quite a lot to do with the collapse of Italy and the initial invasion of Europe.

"Since we are all making plans it can do no harm to make some measurements," says M. Jaeger in "**Liberty versus Equality**," which has just been published (price 3s.) by T. Nelson and Sons in their Discussion Books Series.

Our readers will have appreciated Miss Jaeger's powers of critical analysis in the book reviews she has written for the LAND GIRL. In her latest book, these powers are exercised with devastating effect on the roseate Utopian visions some of us like to cherish. Miss Jaeger writes with beautiful clarity and thinks as clearly as she writes. She has the courage to pursue a thought wherever it leads and she adorns her tale with wit and points her thesis with knowledge. She loves to haul us down out of the clouds, but she also suggests practical ways in which post-war problems may be met with some hope of their solution. Into this short and easily read work the author has packed more than most writers get into three times the space. It is a provocative book and all Discussion Groups should get hold of it at once; it will make a success of any evening as long as someone strong minded is in the chair to prevent everyone talking at once.

THE LAND GIRL

MACHINERY GIRLS

We have been in the W.L.A. two years now, working almost since joining for the Machinery Department of the Radnor War Agricultural Executive Committee, and have done a lot of hill ploughing with caterpillar tractors. During a wet weather spell we were lucky enough to go round with our foreman to attend to and adjust all the various caterpillars in the county. This was really very interesting and we felt quite like mechanics when we'd finished.

This year, for the first time in our county we had combined harvesters, and as they were hauled by caterpillars they came our way. We took part in a big demonstration with the combines, on one of our large hills—300 acres—which had a splendid crop of oats. Photographers and press interviewers made it an exciting day for us.

Before the war I was in a Liverpool office and my friend in a London store. We have the same Christian names and are known as the "Two Ednas"; our surnames both represent useful articles you will notice.

We thoroughly enjoy life on the land and cannot imagine settling down to city life again after so much open air!

E. H. Hankey,
Brecc & Rads. E. M. Cole.

On New Year's Day Lady Denman received a telegram from the Soviet Women's Anti-fascist Committee in Moscow sending heartiest greetings to all the Land Army.

If you are not already a subscriber to War Savings, why not start the New Year well and become one? The annual report of the Agricultural War Savings Advisory Committee, on which the Women's Land Army is represented, mentions the valuable contribution made by the War Savings Groups which have been established in many Land Army hostels. If you are attached to a Land Army hostel or club, make sure that it is playing its part.

EXTRA COUPONS

Members of the Land Army as agricultural workers qualify for the ten additional clothing coupons known as the Industrial Supplement. To obtain the coupons, your employer has to make an application on your behalf to the nearest Employment Exchange before Feb. 26th.

A NICE GIRL

I knew a girl who was so pure
She could not say the word manure.
Indeed her modesty was such
She wouldn't pass a rabbit hutch,
And butterflies upon the wing
Would make her blush like anything.

That lady is a gardener now
And all her views have changed somehow;

She squashes greenfly with her thumb
And knows how little snowdrops come;
In fact the job that she has got
Has broadened out her mind a lot.

Reginald Arkell.

When permission to print the above lines in the LAND GIRL was asked, it was suggested that "gardener" in the first line of the last verse should be changed to "land girl." To this Mr. Arkell replied as follows:—

"I very much appreciate your suggestion that 'the girl who was so pure' should join the W.L.A. Indeed, she has practically done so already. But, if we make her transfer official, what is to happen to her when the war is over and she wishes to return to her garden?

"Suppose, for instance, that Tennyson had been paid a similar compliment. We might now be singing:

Come into the Farmyard, Maud,
The old roan cow has calved.

"Would it meet the case if you print the verses in their original form, with the suggestion that the word 'Land Girl' be substituted for 'gardener' in byres and places where they sing?"

K. Sutton, 35960, won a special prize of a silver cup at a ploughing match in Northants. Asked for particulars, she wrote "There is not much I can tell you really. There were some 16 competitors using two, three and four furrow ploughs. I was the only girl and was using a four furrow Oliver plough and Oliver tractor. The work that I did was on stubble as were the rest. As a rule the two and three furrow ploughs when setting out a ridge had to split it back. The four furrows were exempt from this as it was thought impossible to do this. However as I had always split it back with the plough I was using, I did so, rather to the astonishment of some of the spectators. The remaining condition was that each competitor should turn half an acre per furrow of his plough in two and a half hours so that as I had a four furrow plough I had two acres to plough.

THE LAND GIRL

CLOTHING HINTS

E. M. Barraud, 9600 (Cambs), has an excellent idea for using old oilskins: "Cut off the arms below the armpits, make a hem at the top and thread elastic (or a bit of elastic eked out with string!) through the hem. They are very useful for picking sprouts or similar arm-wetting jobs. From the best parts of the body of the oilskin, one can make useful thigh pieces (rather like outsize shorts) fastened to one's belt at the waist and long enough to come over the tops of one's gumboots. These are also useful for sprouting or generally to protect one's thighs and knees, and have proved a great success."

Bow Street Hostel, in Cardiganshire, sends something rather similar. "Cut off the foot part of an old stocking and sew up the end in the shape of a mitten, make a thumb from any part of the foot which had not been darned and fit it into the mitten. Tighten the top to fit the wrist. For extra warmth when cutting mangolds, cut out bits of an old oilskin, cover palm and thumb of mitten and sew on tightly. We have used these mittens and find them very warm and waterproof—we have made two pairs each so that while one pair is in use the other can be washed and dried."

H. Whincup, 40023 (Bucks), writes: "My old pullover was in good condition except for the sleeves which had shrunk and frayed. I unpicked the sleeves, then cutting out the armholes to shape them, I carefully picked up the stitches, first the front then the back on two needles only, and knitted about four rows. It makes a very useful sleeveless pullover."

Then, after my old socks had worn beyond darning, I cut off the heels straight across the foot, then sewed the toe piece back on to the leg, being careful not to make a thick join. These are to be worn over another pair of socks under the gumboots; it is surprising how they save one's socks."

J. Grundy, 11614 (Surrey), made most successful pants to wear under dungarees out of old shirts. "The shirts were sound from under the arms downwards. I cut them right across, then made a 3-inch cut up the centre, back and front, making the cut edge the bottom of the garment and the old hem the top. I cut from the rest of the shirt a strip 10 inches long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide, pointed at both ends with the slants towards the points each measuring 3 inches. I then hemmed the

edges of the legs and sewed the strip in position. Elastic or a cord (if no elastic) can be run through the ready-made hem at the top. The whole operation took me three quarters of an hour, hand sewing."

D. Parris, 56137 (Kent), suggests little shields of wash leather for toes and heels to socks, and both she and E. Peel, 56914 (Herts) recommend leather on the inside of legs of breeches. The latter used an old handbag for the purpose.

MEMORIES

I wish that I could bottle the different scents—hay, damp earth, ripe fruit, wood smoke and the spice of the cedar trees. Scents conjure up memories, and after all, who knows what the next job will be?

I shall not forget the fine tilth of seed-beds, the richness of newly-turned soil, large onions hanging in bunches in the storeroom, the freshness of spring mornings, the dew sparkling on cabbages, the distant sounds of hunting carried by the wind on autumn days, the wood pigeons calling "Don't scold so, Sophie." Good days; bad days; scorching days in the summer picking caterpillars off rows of cabbages, or unloading hay while the sweat dripped into one's eyes. Windy days spent pruning while the ladder swayed dangerously. Freezingly cold days when one's hands and feet were lumps of ice, when water had to be carried to the cows a long way after digging a narrow track through deep snow—and what a lot of water even two cows need! The thrill of tending Cynthia's calf (born on New Year's Day) until it went to market ten days later. The fun when a goat suddenly appeared in the Bothy. The glow that comes after digging or barrowing heavy loads in cold weather. The satisfaction of receiving good service badges and upon being told that one has done a job well. The aches and pains and weariness forgotten after well-earned rest and the peaceful sleep that follows a hard day's work in the open air—all these things are stored in my memory.

I have gained so much through working on the land; good health, and an increasing knowledge and understanding of the countryside; appreciation of the difficulties of those who wrest a living from the soil, and respect for the skill of the countryman. Above all things I have learned not to take my daily bread for granted.

Worcs.

D. Pembridge, 34573.

THE LAND GIRL

"Women at War," Margaret Goldsmith.
(Lindsay Drummond 10s. 6d.)

"Growing Up," Angela Thirkell.
(Hamilton 9s.)

The American author of "Women at War" has studied the war-work of British women very thoroughly and knows a great deal more about it than most Britons know. Being American, she can also talk about it with great freedom and need not restrain her enthusiasm. All the Women's Services, the Civil Defence, the factory workers, and even the obscure and harried housewife get their due; and the bare account of organisations and activities is lightened by numerous anecdotes amusing and pathetic. The Land Army has a chapter to itself, full of appreciation, though one could wish that it had contributed a larger share of the very attractive photographs. The author brings some evidence to show that many Land Army girls will want to remain on the land after the war, preferably on holdings of their own.

If Miss Goldsmith gives the impression that everything in the garden is lovely and no improvements in the sphere of women's war-work conceivable, it is a generous fault. On the other hand, she discusses with the anxiety of a good feminist, how far women's new rights and opportunities are likely to survive the war, and comes to no definite conclusion, except that they will have to take more interest in politics if they are to hold the ground they have gained.

It is difficult for an addict of Angela Thirkell's charming novels to guess how they will strike new readers, since the same delightful people, their families, friends and connections appear again and again in one novel after another. But perhaps it is safe to assume that anyone who reads light novels at all is already familiar with Lydia Merton and Philip Winter and acid old Nannie Allen and that chuckle-headed novelist, Mrs. Morland, and all the rest of them. There is not much story in "Growing Up;" it is all amusing incident and conversation; and, though most of the characters are engaged in the Services or in strenuous war-work, their activities merely serve to provide new piquant situations, such as Mrs. Morland's remarkable lecture to the convalescent soldiers. Earnest-minded people should avoid this book; it will infuriate them; all the women characters have a streak of pure idiocy, and the "values," such as they are, remain not just impenitently, but almost unconsciously feudal. M. Jaeger.

CABBAGES HAVE CHARACTER

"Garden work for you," they said, firmly. Jane visualised her dull existence. Rows and rows of uninteresting vegetables. You put things in and they came up. You hoed and hoed the things you didn't put in which came up.

But before Jane had been in the garden for six months, she found that even a turnip has its whims. The humble cabbage, which she had imagined would flourish in the poorest soil, proved to be a greedy creature, devouring quantities of manure.

This was also true of runner beans. As old Silas, the gardener remarked: "If you don't put nothin' underneath, then you don't get nothin' on top." So into the trench went a good quantity of manure. When the weather was dry, Silas watered the plants copiously, and when the pods refused to set, he sprayed the flowers in the evening. A wonderful crop of beans was the result.

Carrots, Jane learned, did not react favourably to manure, as it caused them to twist and fork, becoming a bad shape.

She regarded the modest leek with affection, for one could merely drop it in a deep hole, water it, hoe between the rows occasionally, and a fine plant would appear, with little attention.

Above all, Jane grew to hate lettuce. Some she planted too deeply and they damped off. The slugs and leather-jackets ate their fill, and most of the rest, Jane declared, died for sheer spite.

But all the same, Jane would not change to farm work now. "Just rows and rows of uninteresting cows," says Jane.

Berks.

J. Maynard, 59767.

The Women's Farm and Garden Association have recently appointed a number of regional organisers who arrange meetings for all members in their regions. In some places local organisers have also been appointed. Members of the W.L.A. are always welcome and they will find the meetings and discussions both interesting and helpful especially if they intend to make a career on the land. Volunteers who would like to get into touch with the regional organiser in their area should write to the Women's Farm and Garden Association Headquarters, at Courtauld House, Byng Place, London, W.C.1.

New Volunteer, (after 3 weeks training) "You did say a bull was a he-cow, didn't you?"

THE LAND GIRL



Gathering cabbages in Essex

By courtesy Southend and County Pictorial.

THRESH DAY

To-day we have been threshing. We're threshing our oats, those terrible oats that took so much cutting, and luckily it isn't a large rick so maybe we shall finish before 4. p.m. My particular job is keeping back the douse or chaff, the dirtiest job of the thresh, as countless Land Girls know.

I arm myself with a light fork and determine grimly to keep the underneath of the machine clear of all douse. My dream is that these seasoned veterans of many a thresh day will turn to my Boss and say "Your Land Girl has certainly made a good job of the douse" and for the first hour I viewed with satisfaction the clear space under the machine. "This isn't going to be so bad," thought I to myself. The breeze which had blown gently, now became more playful and little eddies of douse whirled around my gay chiffon scarf tied in mammy fashion about my head. By the end of the next hour my hair, eyes, mouth, ears and neck had received their fair share of the wretched stuff.

Intent on my work I suddenly realised the machine had stopped and people were collecting at one end of the rick. Drinkings! Great mugs of steaming tea, hunks of bread and cheese, home-made

cake and buns were handed round. I was jolly grateful for the tea as my throat felt as though I'd had my tonsils out about an hour previously. A ten minute break, then back to our jobs.

I found it increasingly difficult to keep the douse clear of the machine. By 12.30 p.m. when we stopped for dinner I thought of the machine as a relentless old monster eager to break the heart and the back of the Land Girl.

After three quarters of an hour the whistle goes again. The wind is stronger and gradually the dirt and dust become fiercer. I feel I know now what a sand storm in the desert must be like. The mounds of douse mount higher and higher, my arms work quicker and quicker and my head throbs and throbs. Just when I feel the machine has beaten me and I can't continue any longer, it stops altogether and there seems to be an uncanny stillness everywhere.

As I call in the cows I think, "Margery, you idiot, why did you leave your nice clean office job to work on the land?" But after a very special thresh-day tea, a bath and complete change I think "Margery, how will you ever leave this grand, healthy, worth-while life to go back into a stuffy office?"
Cornwall.

M. Peel, 72331.

PAULINE WAS UNFORTUNATE

Pauline has already a warm place in the hearts of all those who have read GREEN HANDS—Both old and new friends will be glad to meet her in this further adventure which Barbara Whitton, author of GREEN HANDS and herself a former member of the W.L.A. has written for the LAND GIRL.

We were stooking when the first of the caravans appeared over the brow of the hill. "Oh Mr. Smith!" said Pauline excitedly, as we watched them turn the corner and creak down the road to the village. "They must be part of the Fair. The one advertised outside the blacksmiths."

"Aye" agreed Mr. Smith, imperturbably, going back to his stooking, "Them'll be it. Go on; away with you! Don't let me keep you."

"Keep me Mr. Smith? What from?"

"Miss Whitton, there, told me you were going to try to get a job as the Fat Lady. That'd pay you better'n I can, I'll warrant."

"Oh Mr. Smith! You are mean! I'm not fat really. It only looks that way because I'm so short. But I simply must go to the Fair. Will you come, Barbara? We'll go tonight, after supper."

"Yes, of course we'll go. Tubby. I want to have my fortune told."

Pauline's face grew pink with excitement and she hugged the sheaf in her arms ecstatically. "Oh yes!" she said "That would be lovely! Perhaps they'd tell me how many children I'm going to have!"

"Why, how many do you want, Tubby?"

"Eight! And all sons but one!"

"M'm" said Mr. Smith "You'd better keep that to yourself until you've caught yourself a husband."

There is a flat stretch of common ground on the river bank in Newton and that is where the Fair was to be held. Already, by the time Pauline and I had arrived, the ground was packed with people. Over the tents and booths the blue naphtha flares spat defiance at the black-out regulations. They filled the damp river air with the smell of paraffin. All about us was the jostle and crush of a country crowd. In the centre of the tents the small merry-go-round rushed by with a clash of music. In among the clamour and the shrieks of laughter, was the thump of wooden balls on taut canvas and the crack of rifles from the range near by.

Above the crowd a man, perched squarely on a wooden box, was shouting at the top of his voice. He had a curious magnetism and we stopped for a moment to listen to what he had to say.

In our trousers pockets we clutched a handful of sticky coins that later we would spend. But there was no hurry. The enchantment of a night in a fair was on us, and we meant to drink its magic to the full.

At the cokernut-shy the young hefties from the neighbourhood were sweating grimly in an effort to knock down a prize for their girls. The wooden balls hurtled through the air and crashed into the canvas at the back, but even when a lucky shot found its mark, we noticed that very few of the cokernuts fell down. Like a foundation stone, they seemed to be well and truly laid.

We wandered on, however, to the wheel of fortune. Here, Pauline stopped, spellbound. Perched on top of the pyramid of prizes was a beautiful black velvet cat. He had green glass eyes and white whiskers which stuck out on either side of his face.

"Oh! I must try for him!" said Pauline eagerly. "How much money have I got left? I must keep back sixpence for the fortune teller. Do you think I can win him with one shilling and twopence ha'penny?"

Pauline's first attempt was fruitless, but at the end of her second the wheel of fortune hovered uncertainly over a paper bird on the end of a stick and a packet of cigarettes. It finally plumped in favour of the latter. Pauline was delighted, in spite of the fact that she doesn't smoke. The black cat, however, still remained tantalisingly aloof. Like a carrot in front of a donkey, it spurred her on to fresh efforts. This time the wheel presented her with a glass bowl containing a rather seedy looking goldfish.

Pauline and the goldfish looked at each other a trifle uncertainly. "It's a nice little fish, of course, Barbara" she said. "I wouldn't hurt its feelings for the world but what will Mrs. Smith say when I arrive back with it?"

"I should ask the man to change it."

The man, however, proved to be immovable. He obviously didn't much like the look of the fish himself.

"I shouldn't worry" I consoled Pauline, "I'm sure the poor thing won't last the night out anyway. Have another try and see if you can win anything to feed it on."

But the wheel of fortune had shot its

bolt. It wouldn't play any more, and with her goldfish clutched to her bosom, Pauline and I moved on in search of further amusement.

"Now we simply must find the fortune teller" said Pauline, "If we don't find her soon I shall have spent my sixpence. I do hope there *is* one."

"Is one! Look over there!"

We had wandered away from the centre of the Fair into a long corridor of booths. Here the naphtha flares were fewer and the noise fainter. We could just make out that on each tent there was a notice claiming that in it was the one and only "Gipsy Lee."

"The one and only Gipsy Lee in Europe" said one. "The one and only Gipsy Lee in Asia" said another.

"Whichever is the real one?" said Pauline, "Or do you suppose they all belong to the same family?"

"You go in one of them, Tubby," I suggested "and I'll go in another. Then we shan't have to wait about for each other."

"Oh! Do you think it will be all right?" Pauline sounded dubious. "I've never had my fortune told before. I sort of hoped you'd come in with me."

"Now, don't be a goose. Of course it will be all right." Picking on the one and only Gipsy Lee from the New Forest, I dragged Pauline to the front of her tent and pulling aside the flap, I pushed her in. She went in giving a little squeak.

My own one and only Gipsy Lee from Asia proved to be a large woman covered in indescribable grime. It was very dark in the little tent, and for that I was rather glad.

"Come right in, Lady" she said, in a hoarse voice. "Cross the Gipsy's hand with silver and I'll tell your fortune." I did the crossing business of her terrible hand as quickly as possible.

"Give me something personal to hold, Lady" she said then. "Your ring or a scarf."

"I'm afraid I'm not wearing either"

"Give me your glove then, Lady."

"I'm afraid I have'nt one. Would a shoe do?"

"O. K." said Gipsy Lee, indifferently. I take off my shoe and she begins turning it slowly over and over in her hands. It was not a particularly clean shoe, for I had worn it all day in the soil and mud of the fields. A lump of mud dropped off the heel into Gipsy Lee's lap. But she didn't seem to notice it.

"I see a fair haired man, dearie" she says, in her husky voice "And a red haired

woman in uniform. And rocks! Goats! I see goats! And a ship! You are going to Malta!"

As I replaced my shoe and made my way outside the tent again, I felt rather disappointed. I felt I hadn't really had my money's worth.

"I could have made up a more likely tale myself" I thought. "Perhaps she minded more about the mud than she let on, and it upset her familiar."

Pauline was still closeted with the one and only Gipsy Lee from the New Forest. When she eventually emerged, her face was pink and her eyes like a couple of saucers.

"Barbara!" she said "Do you know what she told me? I've got to beware of a small, dark man who means danger! And I'm going on a journey across the water! And tomorrow I'm going to get a letter. And I asked her if I was going to have eight children and she said 'No, probably nine!'"

The next morning Pauline woke and leaped out of bed almost simultaneously and in a few minutes she was dashing into her clothes.

"What on earth is the matter with you?" I ask as I begin to dress more slowly.

"Oh! Barbara. Have you forgotten? I'm going to get a letter! I'm going to dash out and intercept the postman before breakfast. If I don't he won't come to us until mid-day."

"Don't be late for breakfast. Not that you ever are late for a meal. Even for a letter."

"I won't be late" promised Pauline, and went down the wooden cottage stairs in a series of bumps.

There was no sign of Pauline, however, as we sat down for breakfast in the farm kitchen.

"Has Miss Gardener slept in?" asked Mrs. Smith as she dumped down her plate of porridge.

"No, she's gone out to meet the postman."

"Love letters I suppose" said Mr. Smith "Who's she been making eyes at this time?"

"Miss Whitton!" (Mrs. Smith had apparently met Pauline's goldfish for the first time; he was swimming slowly round her kitchen sink!) "What in the name of goodness is this?"

"That's Pauline's prize" I explained, going out to the scullery to join her. "She thought he looked cramped in his little glass bowl. She thought if she put him in your sink each night he could

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get some exercise."

"You wait until she gets back!" said Mrs. Smith darkly "I'll cramp her!"

It was at this moment that we heard the slow faltering footsteps in the yard outside. The scullery door opened slowly and there, framed against the bright backcloth of a summer morning, was Pauline, muddy and beraggled, and absolutely dripping with water. Mrs. Smith shrieked and covered her mouth with her hand.

"Lawks-a-mercy!" she gasped. "Miss Gardener! Whatever have you been and gone and done?"

"Me been and gone and done!" said Pauline, coming into the scullery and standing with the water oozing out of the tops of her shoes. "I like that. Just wait till I see Mr. Smith"

"What's the matter, Miss Gardener?" Mr. Smith appeared in the kitchen door with a large slice of toast in one hand and a knife in the other. "Good heavens, girl! Wherever have you been?"

"It's your Willie" Pauline stormed at him. "Why can't you keep him shut up?"

"Willie?"

"You'd better tell us all about it, Tubby"

"So I will as soon as I can get a word in edgeways. I never have liked bulls and now I hate them!"

"Do tell us what happened?"

"Well, I went to meet the postman like I said I would—

"Had he a letter for you?"

"Yes, at least it was a card. From my old school, asking me for my annual subscription!"

"And what happened?"

"I was coming back the short cut through the fields when suddenly I heard an awful snort and a sort of crashing of hooves. And there, just behind me in the middle of his herd of cows, was Willie!"

"Why didn't you run for it?"

"Run! You should have seen me! Only you wouldn't have been able to for dust. I got to the fence a few paces in front of him, but I couldn't get over quick enough. He caught me just as I was poised on the top rail. I'll have a bruise so I won't be able to sit down for a week!"

"But how did you get so wet? He can't have tossed you all the way to the river"

"You forget the duck pond!" said Pauline coldly. "The next thing I knew I was squatting on my hands and knees in the water with my mouth full of

muddy feathers."

"Well, it serves you right" said Mr. Smith. "You ought not to have been a'tormenting of the poor creature. He's only a poor dumb animal."

Pauline was speechless.

"But don't you see, Tubby" I told her excitedly. "It's all coming true! First, you do get a letter, like Gipsy Lee said you would. Then you suffer danger from a small, dark man—no one can say an Aberdeen Angus bull doesn't fit that—and finally you go on a journey across the water!"

"Into the water, you mean" said Pauline crossly. And then she brightened. "All the same, there is one thing about it. If all that's come true, perhaps all the rest will come true too! Perhaps I really *will* have nine children!"

"Nine is it now" said Mr. Smith. "Mind I'm telling you! It's time I was away out of this! Where's my hat?"

HEADQUARTERS' NOTES

Volunteers having relatives or friends who are anxious to join the Land Army will be glad to know that recruiting was reopened on January 3rd. for milking and other responsible jobs. Under present regulations all women wishing to join the Land Army, including girls below registration age, must obtain the permission of their Employment Exchange before applying for enrolment.

Just as the sun was rising.

Alarm clocks are not quite so rare as they were a few months ago. The Women's Land Army is likely to be able to help Land Army hostels to obtain alarm clocks. This note is intended to help you if you are a milker or other special-class worker who has to get up by or before 5 o'clock each morning. Such workers may now obtain permits which will enable them to buy alarm clocks through the local branch of either the National Union of Agricultural Workers or the Transport and General Workers' Union and that applies whether or not the worker is herself a member of the Union.

If you think that you qualify for an alarm clock permit, ask your County Office for the address of your local branch of one of the agricultural Unions and write to that office applying for a permit and giving particulars of the nature of your employment and the time when you have to get up each day.

Inez Jenkins.

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A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

TO THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S LAND ARMY FROM THE SECRETARY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR SCOTLAND.



Those of us who have been in any degree responsible for rearing and nurturing the Scottish Women's Land Army cannot but feel a glow of pride when we think of the subsequent development of what, to begin with, seemed a very delicate child. As the W.L.A. grew in strength so it grew in grace and popularity. Farmers from John o' Groats to Galloway are now ready in their praise of your work and we at Headquarters realise to the full and appreciate heartily all that you have done to help accomplish the prodigious results achieved from Scotland's fields during these long war years. The job is not yet finished though, and abundantly as you have lab-

Volunteers who have admired the window display at the W.L.A. Office in London at 421, Oxford Street will be interested to note that praise of this scheme was expressed in "Display and Signs." Their comment ended with the following sentence "Secret of this work is the pooling of brains behind the idea until perfection is achieved." The W.L.A. owes very warm thanks to Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., who gave most generous help and advice about the design of the window.

oured in the past there can yet be no slackening off; indeed more than ever may be asked of you, but that you will be ready for any additional demands I haven't the slightest doubt.

There are now nearly 10,000 of you and it is a matter of great satisfaction that many have already earned the special armlet awarded for 4 years' service.

As experience dictated we have done everything possible to improve your working conditions. Wages during training and employment are better, and the arrangements for maintenance during periods of unemployment are more satisfactory. Even the perennial problem of uniform equipment is not quite so troublesome as it was. Then there is the Welfare and Benevolent Fund which many of you have so well supported; from it financial help can be obtained, not only in cases of hardship, but later for those of you who may want to set up on your own on the land or undertake further training in agriculture. Another improvement from the point of view of those of you who do not like living and working by yourselves has been effected through the establishment of hostels of which there are now 138 in operation throughout the country.

All these are but your due and I am glad that they have been made possible for in all conscience you deserve practical evidence of your country's deep debt of gratitude.

At the beginning of this new year I send you my best thanks and hope that you will keep right on to the end of the furrow.

Patrick R. Laird.

Miss Kennett Hayes, of Hereford, is still selling her special spiral-pattern, oiled wool, knitted socks, excellent under gumboots, at 2s. 10d. a pair, post free, all profits to the Benevolent Fund. Write W.L.A. 131, St. Owen Street, Hereford.

To see these girls, few of them over 20, driving powerful tractors and doing all sorts of jobs that we men thought only we could do makes one feel rather humble.

from Essex Chronicle.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

I hope you will pardon this unwarranted intrusion, but please let me explain! A few days ago some copies of the "Daily Mirror" arrived in our mess, on the centre page of one of these papers was a charming photograph of a young lady, holding in her hand, of all things, a bunch of dead rats. This photograph and the accompanying article, describing what unusual but good work these girls were doing, properly took our eye.

I must tell you that we are all very proud of the way the girls of England have adapted and are still adapting themselves to various jobs. Jobs which were previously unheard of to the general public, and mostly all carried out by men. We appreciate, too, whilst some of the jobs are only a matter of routine, others entail long hours and very little recognition, like the one about which I now write—this job of rat-catching, which is, by no means an enviable one, is one which we should have thought would have been carefully avoided by members of the fair sex. So I should like to voice our praise and admiration in this respect, and if I may, add a little personal message to the young ladies now indulging in these rodent hunts and their ultimate extermination.—Ladies, we salute you! We take off our hats to you! And though your job is certainly a tough one, don't let it toughen you, too much, and whatever you do, please don't let it destroy or even dull your feminine distinctiveness and charm.

May I, on behalf of the boys, wish you all every success in the future, together with heartiest greetings for Christmas and the New Year, and happy hunting!

R.A.F. (E. Africa).

Dear Editor,

I have been in the Land Army 28 months; my friend who works with me is not a member but hopes to be when they start recruiting again.

We wanted to keep something, so first we arranged to rent a nearby field, then went to a local farm auction of stock, and after having a good look round and asking advice from several farmers, we chose a roan heifer in second calf. One of the farmers did the bidding. She gave us a good run for our money while taking her along to her new field. We call her J.P., and are we proud of her, and will be even more so when she calves in April.

E. Kent.

P. Johnson, 46419.

Dear Editor,

We three (two L.G.s and a cat) live in a two-roomed flat, the former living quarters of the grooms, in the stableyard of a lovely old English Hall which is now a convalescent home for soldiers.

Our flat we call "Ploughshare" and it consists of a bedroom, sitting room and little kitchenette upstairs, and downstairs there is a sort of glory hole where we keep logs, bicycles, Wellingtons and an accumulation of boots and shoes. In the living room there is a big open range which we do our cooking on, and I may add, my friend and I are quite experienced cooks now! after a few failures when trying out some rather too ambitious dishes, we now stick to "good plain fare" and a good old Irish stew with plenty of vegetables is our chief standby.

Sheila is a gardener and I work at a nearby farm, we both of us do full Land Army hours and all our cooking and housework in our spare time. There is always plenty to do in the evenings with a whist drive or dance usually every week, and we have joined the local First Aid Group and Rest Centre Service. A short time ago we tried our hand at interior decoration and distempered our walls cream and whitewashed the ceiling and having adorned our oak beam with cows' horns (one of my collecting hobbies) and hung the walls with pictures of rural scenes brought from home, "Ploughshare" is beginning to look quite rustic.

Leics.

J. Morley, 68324.

Dear Editor,

How many of us in pre-war days joined in the general laughter and pointed a scornful finger at the so-called "country yokel"? I have been guilty of this and now feel so ashamed that I am bound to write and say how far from being an object of scorn he really is. May I offer a few words of thanks and appreciation to all the country people I have come in contact with and assure them that I am proud to serve in their ranks.

Hereford.

O. Bell, 94776.

Dear Editor,

Is this a record? It is twelve years since I found my first four-leafer. It was deftly hidden in a spray of shamrock, worn on St. Patrick's Day. Seven years passed before I found another. This time a clover in my own garden. In April, 1941, I joined the W.L.A. Since then my collection has risen to the grand total of eighty four-leafers, four five-leafers and one six-leafer! In not a single occasion have I actually searched for the

specimen. An instinctive magnetism has forced me to stoop and pluck at the right moment. Sufficient it is to add, however, that I am always dubious of showing the collection to my friends. It is bound to call forth the inevitable comment: "So this is how you spend your time in the Land Army!"
Hants. M. M. Collins, 43011

DON'T FORGET the winter Competition for best literary, artistic and practical efforts by members of the W.L.A. For full particulars, see page 8 of October LAND GIRL or write to the Editor.

Congratulations to Shenley Lodge Hostel, Herts, which raised £5 10s. for the Red Cross in three nights by carol singing, bringing their total since August to £15—and also to S. Jackson, 37437, of Radnor, who grew 9 lbs. of magnificent onions which raised £10 2s. for the Benevolent Fund when they were presented by her employer for a raffle. Also to J. Powell, 64785, (Oxon) with two other volunteers, five American soldiers and three Chapel members raised £16 10s. by carol singing.

The Penguin Co. have sold out all stocks and are returning money for unfulfilled orders as rapidly as possible. Any volunteer who has not now received either her order or cash should write again to Penguin Supply, Quality House, Wood Street, Manchester 3.

FOR SALE. Army Officer's British Warm (short riding)—suitable lady. Chest 40ins., length 36ins. As new £4. Also, Officer's tunics could be adapted as riding jackets—£2. All pre-war material. Miss D. S. 18, Holland Road, W. 14.

URGENTLY WANTED.—Good trained dog, suitable for rabbiting. Dymocks Farm, Bicester, Oxon.

WANTED.—Home for Labrador cross-bred Puppy. Make useful dog, excellent companion. Roberts, Valley Farm, Dagnall, Berkhamsted, Herts.

WANTED.—Size 6, Brown riding boots, good condition. Curtis, Hill Farm, Deopham Wymondham, Norfolk.

WANTED. black or brown riding boots, fives, apply Hills, 134, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leics.

This month's cover design is by Miss Audrey Wakeford, 40839, (Berks.)

BENEVOLENT FUND

On December 31st the fund totalled £51,283 11s. 4d. The monthly total was £4,021 5s. 3d. Kent has the highest total of £5,548 14s. 10d. and Leicester and Rutland the highest monthly total of £600 10s.

Well done, everybody! We reached £50,000 just before the end of the year. Leics & Rutland, and W. Sussex ran a dead heat and together tipped us over the mark; Leicester and Rutland with £600 from their special effort and W. Sussex with £500 from a Christmas Draw. Can we now make and keep a New Year resolution to raise the remaining £50,000 by the end of 1944? Spurred on by Kent's fine achievements several counties are already arranging "Benevolent Fund Campaigns" during the coming months, and we hope those who quail at the idea will think again and decide in favour.

The Christmas Cards have been most successful, resulting in a profit of well over £500. All cards were quickly sold and we apologise to those volunteers whose orders were unfulfilled. November and December brought many splendid contributions. Space prevents our mentioning all, some of the most notable were from Glos., when Mrs. Rowden's bridge drive and sale raised £170, and Miss B. Whittaker's sale £100, and the W.A.E.C. staff dance £75; in Derbys Miss Wardley's jumble sale produced £57. Mr. Sayer's dance in Staffs, £57, and The Timber Corps has contributed £300 by dances, whist drives and employers contributions. Mrs. Smith, Flints, kept up the reputation of Wales with an individual contribution of £50 10s., and the Wores fruit and vegetable show brought in £61. Northants War Charities Fund gave us a grant of £75. Miss Hunter sent £52 for a dance in Warwickshire.

The Ulverston dance Lancs raised £100, and Holland has set the pace for Christmas Auctions with £250.

We look back with pride and satisfaction on 1943 and forward with hope to 1944.

County News

LONDON and MIDD.—A series of lectures with a view to helping those entering for proficiency tests are being arranged in Harrow, Hounslow and Uxbridge districts. It is hoped to hold the tests in April, and the entry list will close in February. Marriage among the L.G.s employed at the Central Middlesex Hospital is almost epidemic. This month we congratulate Mrs. Thompson (nee Lamb) on following in the footsteps of two of her colleagues. The vet prescribed a certain black medicine for a sick heifer in Eileen Judd's care. The heifer speedily recovered, so when Eileen contracted a bad cough she prescribed the heifer's mixture for herself, but in smaller doses, with, she reports, excellent results. We think this was enterprising of Eileen but do not advocate her venture being widely copied. Congratulations to Mrs. Pilkington on selling in 14 months National Savings Certificates to the value of £94 1s. 6d. among the eight Land Girls employed with her.

MONMOUTH.—Benevolent Fund has benefited considerably from our seasonal social activities. A happy occasion was a dance held at Glyn Hall Hostel, which realised £30 and we are very grateful for £13 10s. proceeds from dances held at Cross Ash Hostel. In October, Mr. D. W. Prosser (father of a L.G.) organised a grand celebrity concert at Newbridge which raised £18 12s. 5d. In a converted barn, murals and stage effects of which, have been executed by L. G's. under the direction of Mary Nethercot. Mount Ballan Hostel Drama Club gave three plays, composed and produced by Mrs. Nethercot and their performance was warmly received and resulted in a profit of £12. Girls of Black Beech Farm, Goytre, organised a successful and profitable whist drive from which the magnificent sum of £23 2s. was obtained.

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A most enjoyable Christmas party was given by Mrs. Beverley Burton (D.R.) for the girls in her area, while girls of Witla Court Hostel gave a dinner dance which sixty guests, including the County Secretary, attended. We are proud to announce the names of our first six volunteers to earn the new four-year armlet. They are M. Eastup, J. Parry, N. Poole, C. Strawbridge, N. Saffin and G. Laugharne. Mrs. Eastup was a land girl during the last war and has remained in the same employment since she volunteered in 1939. Is this a record? Nora Poole has also worked on the same farm for four years.

NORFOLK.—We have two achievements to record; T. Rose, 96415, who comes from London and has been in the L.A. for a year as a milk-er discovered one morning that both the head cowman and her fellow L.G., who was second cowman, were ill. Sae dealt with the herd of 45 machine-milked cows single-handed until her helpers had recovered—a period of several days—and the work was done perfectly. E. Johnson, 79758, another Londoner, has been doing better than the local farm workers at sugar beet work; in one week she pulled, knocked and topped 2 acres at £3 10s. per acre. At a party on December 11th Sir Henry Upcher, Chairman of the W.A.E.C., presented 4 year armlets to 15 out of the 28 volunteers eligible to receive them. Bale Hostel gave a popular "At Home" one Sunday to the village.

NORTHANTS.—Forty-three W.L.A. members who have earned their four year armlets, together with the four year old staff of the County Office entertained their Chairman, Lady Spencer, at a luncheon at the Hind Hotel, Wellingborough, prior to the presentation of these armlets on Nov. 20th, as a mark of their affection and gratitude for her four years of unsparing service on their behalf. They invited to meet their quest of honour members of the W.L.A. County Committee all of whom had served on this Committee since its inception, and the officials of all those organisations who had worked with and for the Land Army throughout these four years and Mr. W. Cowper Barrons (of the Northamptonshire Chronicle and Echo and allied newspapers) and also a representative of the Kettering Evening Telegraph and allied newspapers. Miss Brew came all the way from Balcombe to represent the four year staff at Headquarters to whom we owe so much. Miss Gwen Loake, 12983, took the Chair and after an excellent luncheon there were several toasts and some excellent speeches. After the speeches Lady Spencer presented the four-year armlets and was presented with a bouquet of carnations by C. Sherratt, 23999, on behalf of the

W.L.A. The County Secretary was presented with some beautiful chrysanthemums by P. Rowlitt, 20911, and a lovely edition of "O Happy Countryman"—beautifully bound and inscribed. And so ended a very memorable and happy party.

NORTH'L'D.—Several excellent efforts by girls privately employed have benefited the Benevolent Fund. Ulgham whist drive and dance realised £33. Fritlington sent £30 and West Learmouth £23. In no case were there more than 6 girls organising the effort so the results were splendid. Hostel efforts continue. I. Wood (Cornhill) and J. Carpenter (Wooler) whose hostels had raised £205 and £102 respectively, represented the county when purses for the Y.W.C.A. War Purposes Fund were presented to H. M. The Queen in London. A drama Competition will be held on April 1st., at the Peoples' Theatre, Newcastle. Proceeds will go to the Benevolent Fund—please support this effort generously. Film shows, lectures, classes, health talks, concerts and performances by ENSA and CEMA have taken place all over the county; the talks given by the W.A.E.C. have proved very helpful. Entries for the Competition "My post war plans" should be sent to the County Welfare Officer by Feb. 28th., 1st. prize £2.

NOTTS.—The first presentation of four year Armlets was made in Nottingham on Dec. 5th to nine members—M. Cheston, A. Thompson, R. Podmore, E. H. Daft, M. E. Stephens, L. G. English, P. Mc Isack, D. Oddy, and K. Wenn—who looked a good advertisement for the healthy life they have led. Miss L. G. English is a veteran of the Land Army of the last war. In the absence through illness of the Chairman, Lady Sibell Argles, the presentation was made by the Secretary Mrs. Jeffcoate. Mrs. Thorpe (County Organiser) read a letter from Lady Sibell in which she sent her heartiest congratulations. The proud wearers of the Red Armlets were then entertained to tea at Lady Sibell's invitation, and a special message of thanks was sent to Lady Sibell with best wishes for a speedy recovery. A small L.A. Club recently started by Miss Littlewood D. R. in the Kirkby-Sutton-in-Ashfield area held their first function on Dec. 15th, in the form of a very enjoyable and successful dance. About 150 were present, and one of the local farmers Mr. Tulson showed his interest by kindly acting as M. C., and also by giving a dozen apples to be raffled, which was greatly appreciated. A second raffle and two spot prizes were given by different members of the Club. A balance of £11 12s. 1d. to be divided between the L.A. Benevolent Fund, the Club funds, the local Comforts Fund, and the local Prisoners Fund was a good finish to an enjoyable evening.

SOMERSET.—We are proud to have as many as 45 members who have earned the new four-year armlet, and very grateful to the Chairman, the Hon. Lady Langman, for the delightful Party which she gave these volunteers on Nov. 30th., at Dellers Cafe, Taunton, when the armlets were presented by the Earl of Radnor, who in the course of his speech, said that he had never seen such "youthful" veterans. Members in the Weston-super-Mare and Bristol districts very much enjoyed two parties given by Mrs. Charles Hill on Nov. 6th and 13th to introduce them to Y.W.C.A. club facilities. New clubs have been started at Faulkland, (a joint arrangement with other transferred war workers) at Charlton Musgrove (the Under 30 club), a real outpost of the County, and at Ston Easton, where the idea arose from an activity arranged for the Benevolent Fund. The Yeovil Club is considering amalgamation with the new Ministry of Labour Transferred War Workers Club, which opened on Dec. 15th. Witham Friary Club had a grand Whist Drive re-



Four Yorkshire sisters with 10 years' service between them.
By Yorkshire Herald.

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cently, Churchill is running Dressmaking Classes and Ilminster had a special New Year's Party. At Congresbury, where weekly handicraft classes have been held, a most successful sale of the work produced by members resulted in £12. We should like to congratulate Orchard Neville Hostel on its Concert of home talent, and the Grange, Flax Bourton, on its successful Whist Drive. Dances, whist drives and entertainments have brought in splendid sums for the Benevolent Fund, the highest from Shepton Mallet (over £42), then Ston Easton (over £31), North Cadbury (£25), Bruton (£25) and Bridgwater (£20).

STAFFS.—Further Proficiency Tests have been held in milking and Dairy Work, General Farm Work and Poultry keeping. Congratulations to J. Wright, M. Mills, B. Wynne, H. Johnson, D. Wiseman, A. Snape, D. Hudson and E. Allsop on gaining distinctions. We congratulate K. Jones and C. Blore on being our first L.G.s, to be elected to the committee of a Y.F. Club also on organising (with the help of our new D.R. Mrs. Earp) a dance in the Uttoxeter area which raised £57 12s. for the Benevolent Fund. Lea Hall girls and staff raised £2 10s. for the Fund by carol singing. Parties with ENSA shows, folk dancing classes and talks on agricultural subjects by members of the Farm Institute staff have all been enjoyed at hostels. New Clubs have started at Rugeley, Doxey and Barton-under-Needwood. Any girls in these areas are welcome. Details can be had from the County Office.

E. SUFFOLK.—During December four Proficiency Tests in Hand and Machine Milking and Dairy Work have been held at various centres. Of the 27 participants, 20 were successful, and the Judges were most enthusiastic—and slightly surprised!—at the high standard of keenness and efficiency. We are very grateful to these Judges, all well-known local farmers, and especially to Miss Slattery, County Milk Production Officer, who will be officiating at all such Tests. Special congratulations go to the girls who passed with Distinction—Miss J. Goshawk, Miss V. Lucock, Miss N. Skipper, and Miss R. Turner who achieved the really magnificent total of 99 marks. There have been four Welfare Conferences in different areas for local representatives. These were most successful, and we very much appreciated the great interest shown by the large number of representatives who—all extremely busy people—had made a special effort to attend. New Clubs at Fressingfield and Beccles have recently been opened, and several older ones seem to have sprung into life again. Kelsale club had the very nice idea of giving a Christmas tea to the children in their village. Successful dances and whist drives have brought profits to the Benevolent Fund, Woodbridge sending a second £20 and Kelsale a second £10. Oak Lawn (Hoxne) hostel have sent one donation and are now producing a pantomime. We congratulate Kent on the marvellous result of their week and send New Year good wishes to every member of the W.L.A.

W. SUFFOLK.—Proficiency Tests have held our attention this month. The first series of Milking Tests were completed on Dec. 21st.; there were 25 entries, and the standard of work was very high. Three passed with distinction, and we congratulate Misses Ikuine, Spence, and Mrs. Debney. 20 passed, and to the three who failed we say "Better luck next time." One volunteer was unable to compete owing to illness. After Christmas we are arranging tests in other branches of farm work. The American Red Cross Club gave a special Christmas party for all the farm volunteers in the northern areas; this kind thought was much appreciated by them, and we are only sorry that transport difficulties prevented more volunteers from enjoying the very good conjuring show, followed by dancing and refreshments. During January, district representatives and volunteers

throughout the county have undertaken to make a special effort to raise money for the Benevolent Fund; we are hoping to organise one entertainment in every village.

N. WALES.—The C.E.M.A. concert tour of this area was a most successful venture which we are hoping to repeat very soon, we had genuinely appreciative audiences thoroughly delighted to hear such first-class artists. Broadcasting in Welsh, the Caernarvon Club gave a very good account of their activities, and the whole effect was one of jollity and good companionship; they paid tribute to all the Local Representatives who have established this and similar clubs and thanked the public for their generous support of all our activities. In Anglesey the chairman of the county N.F.U. invited the Llanerchymedd volunteers and their friends to a dance which proved outstandingly popular and we are most grateful to Mr. Tom Edwards for giving us this treat and for the very kind compliments he paid to the work of the L.A. Our winter programmes for recreation and education appear popular and there is evidence that our members are eager not only to increase their knowledge of their own special jobs but of the farming industry generally. W.A.E.C. officials have helped with "Fireside Chats" and with technical classes, and there have been courses for groups of volunteers working on private farms, on stock management and clean milk, etc. We are receiving an increasing number of letters giving glowing descriptions of the work our volunteers are undertaking. Our members, too, are joining many local clubs and societies, thus making a very welcome and useful contribution to the community of which they are now a vital part.

WARWICKS.—Christmas parties are in full swing. Alcester club held a Xmas Fair at the Town Hall on Dec. 18th, opened by Mrs. Fielden. The Birmingham club had a successful three-day exhibition and sale of handicrafts in Birmingham in aid of the Benevolent Fund. Dances have been held at the Stratford-on-Avon Town Hall and at the Leamington Palais de Danse, and volunteers at Wellesbourne organised a dance which raised the magnificent sum of £52 for the Benevolent Fund. On Dec. 11th, volunteers were entertained by kind invitation of Studley College and of Messrs Joseph's Cannery in Stratford-on-Avon, and both parties spent a most interesting afternoon.

Two new hostels have been opened recently at Wolverton Court and at Newbold-on-Avon, and the hostels at Dunchurch and Long Marston have been closed. We should like to offer our good wishes to Miss Hazard who has recently been appointed Pioneer Warden for Warwickshire. Miss Hazard first came to us as warden of Atherstone hostel in the summer of 1942, and her appointment as county pioneer is welcomed by all. By the time these notes appear Lady Denman will have honoured us with a visit to present four-year armlets to many of our volunteers.

WILTS.—Several new clubs have opened recently, two of them embarking on the production of plays for Easter. The proceeds of dances and parties organised by the older Clubs have been divided between the Red Cross Agricultural Fund and the Benevolent Fund. Y.F. Clubs have challenged L.G.s to Brain Trusts, Agricultural Bees and Quizzes. Highworth Club went one better. They invited four farmers who specialised on different aspects of farming to come to their meeting and answer 50 questions. No member of this Club ought to have any difficulty in passing their Proficiency Tests. E.N.S.A. have already produced 10 shows, varying from light concert parties to first-class musical entertainment. Members from outlying districts flock in to attend these parties which are very popular. The Guildhall Concert Party came to the Salisbury Club with a very good show, which included lightening sketches of L.G.s as they were and as they would like to be. At the Beaufort

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Hunt Ploughing Competition, L.G.s took second and third places in the Women's Tractor Driving and Ploughing Section.

On the Badminton Estate girls working had a chance encounter with Queen Mary. They were delighted with the Queen's interest in their work.

Anne Hall, Forewomen, writes, "As you know, I get a lot of fun out of this work, but I'd never thought of meeting Royalty on the job."

WORCS.—I. Ell, 40273, sent an interesting account of the first two meetings of the Worcester-shire W.L.A. Council which consists of volunteers nominated by other members of the L.A. in the county. Discussions took place on various matters of great interest to the L.A., including one on post-war plans and at the second meeting an account of the National Conference of Women at the Albert Hall was given by a delegate who had attended. The Council meets every month.

Many congratulations to L. Reeves, 36721, who has received a testimonial from the Royal Humane Society as a result of saving her friend from drowning. Miss Reeves dived into the pool in which her friend had disappeared, found her and brought her out. Miss Reeves was a shop assistant in London before the war but has been working in the L.A. for three-and-a-half years.

YORKS, E.R.—We have opened three new hostels, at Keyingham, Rolston Hall, Hornsea, and Muston Lodge, Filey. Twelve four-year armlets were presented to D. Alderson, H. Calvert, M. Campbell, V. Cole, E. Duncan, W. Galloway, M. Haller, G. Pocklington, J. Taylor, J. Wallace, P. Ward, M. Wilson, at Beverley, on Dec. 4th, by Mr. Hudson, and afterwards the volunteers were entertained to lunch by the chairman, Mrs. Dunnington Jefferson.

Volunteers have lately been more active in raising money for the Benevolent Fund, but there is still room for improvement, and it is hoped that members will make every effort during the winter to organise entertainments for the Fund.

E. Burnett, G. Harrison and E. Wise did well with a miniature whist drive at Langton, which raised almost £15, and K. Shaw's dance at North Ferriby brought in over £11. Congratulations also to Muston Hostel, whose dance produced almost £14 for Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund.

YORKS. N. and W.—The last month has been one for Christmas parties in our Hostels. A Ripon New Year party was given for all children living near the hostel—about 50 altogether—and each had a present—many made by the girls themselves. Terrington also had a childrens' party in addition to a Hot Pot Supper. Moor Park, Beckwithshaw had Mr. Swann the Pests Officer for their Father Christmas. At Easingwold the girls went Carol Singing, for the Benevolent Fund. Our Benevolent Fund total grows slowly, but it is hoped that this will be increased rapidly by the suggestion that all our girls should be invited to give to the Fund one day's pay per year, the new rates of pay this would be 7s. 6d. each girl, and would mean a total of at least £1,500 a year on our present number of girls. On the other side of the Fund we are most grateful to the Benevolent Fund Committee for the grant they have already made to Yorkshire girls. New W.L.A. Clubs are being formed almost each week, the most recent being Scarborough, Barnsley, Thirsk, Gilling West, and Londonderry. Club members from the Harrogate Club formed a Guard of Honour at the wedding of their Chairman, Betty Morely, one member of the Guard of Honour, Susan Coates, had her four year armlet. Many congratulations to O. Schofield who, when her employer was taken ill, successfully attended a calving cow at night by lantern light although she had only twice seen a cow calving and never officiated before.

County Returns

County	Ben.	F.	Total	Em- ployed
	£	s.	d.	
Yorks, N. & W...	638	2	4	4088
Kent ..	5548	14	10	3984
Essex ..	613	11	1	3777
Surrey ..	1320	15	0	2361
Herts. ..	595	10	6	2162
Leics. 1861 } ..				
Rut. 284 } ..	1123	17	4	2145
E. Sussex ..	668	12	9	2022
Bucks. ..	927	9	6	1836
Northants. ..	1436	17	11	1834
Worcs. ..	324	19	7	1800
Somerset ..	726	14	9	1794
Warwicks. ..	875	7	6	1762
Devon ..	670	2	10	1703
Norfolk ..	1296	3	0	1620
W. Sussex ..	1677	17	6	1560
Wilts. ..	428	14	3	1500
Lancs. ..	539	19	2	1007
Cheshire ..	922	2	2	1036
Cornwall ..	170	3	10	1411
North'I'd ..	221	12	2	1386
Notts. ..	287	18	9	1299
Berks. ..	894	18	3	1209
Hunts. 314 } ..				
Cambs. 546 } ..	560	18	5	1207
Ely 347 } ..				
E. Suffolk ..	986	14	3	1128
Yorks, E.R. ..	91	1	9	1091
Oxon ..	486	9	4	1090
Durham ..	220	1	11	1008
Salop ..	410	4	0	1002
Beds. ..	475	15	5	990
Cumbs. & West. ..	302	15	4	974
Kesteven ..	390	11	10	918
Dorset ..	387	11	7	881
Staffs. ..	290	8	2	777
Lindsey ..	523	11	4	740
Glam. ..	457	7	2	698
Hereford ..	891	9	3	656
Monmouth ..	398	6	9	648
Flints. ..	242	2	0	602
London & Middx. ..	604	0	4	600
W. Suffolk ..	897	16	5	594
Denbigh ..	276	14	0	575
N. Wales ..	698	2	8	553
Holland ..	498	18	2	536
Derbyshire ..	581	9	2	533
Pembroke ..	609	9	5	406
I.O.W. ..	68	3	0	363
Carms. & Caras. ..	386	4		360
Brec. & Rad. ..	173	3	5	304
Montgomery ..	196	8	5	211
Timber Corps ..	551	14	7	4108
Glos. ..	1397	16	0	Not. rec'd.
Hants. ..	963	18	1	"

On the 31st December, 1943 there were 71,345 volunteers in employment.

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