

Periscope

April 24 Vol.1

In June we will mark the 80 years which have passed since the D-Day landings. This is a reminder of the almost forgotten yet vital contribution which women in Britain have made in both World Wars to the survival of our Nation, doing what women do best.

The Women's Farm and Garden Union had existed since 1899 and in February 1916 they sent a deputation to meet Lord Selborne. Selborne's Ministry of Agriculture agreed to fund a Women's National Land Service Corps with a grant of £150. Louise Wilkins was to lead the new organisation that was to focus on recruiting women for emergency war work. They were tasked with improving recruitment and provide propaganda about the good cause of women of all classes undertaking agricultural work. The new members of the organisation were to not become agricultural workers but to organise others (e.g. in villages) to do this work. By the end of 1916 they had recruited 2,000 volunteers but they estimated that 40,000 was required.



At the Women's National Land Service Corps's suggestion a Land Army was formed. The WNLSC continued to deal with recruitment and the network assisted in the launch of a "Land Army"; by April 1917 they had over 500 replies and 88 joined the new Land Army where they became group leaders and supervisors.

In time the Land Army would take on 23,000 workers who took the place of the 100,000 workers lost to the forces. The women were paid 18 shillings (90p) a week and this could be increased to 20 shillings (£1) if they were considered efficient. 23,000 was a significant contribution but there were estimated to be 300,000 women working on the land during the First World War.

As the prospect of war again became increasingly likely, the government wanted to increase the amount of food grown within Britain. In April 1939, peacetime conscription was introduced for the first time in British history, which led to shortages of workers on the farms. To grow more food, more help was needed on the farms and so the government restarted the Women's Land Army in July 1939. Though under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, it was given an honorary head – Lady Denman. At first it asked for volunteers. This was supplemented by conscription, so that by 1944 it had over 80,000 members.

The uniform of the Women's Land Army was fawn breeches, green jersey, over fawn shirt, with armband and badge, and brown felt hat. In addition, each recruit was supplied with overcoat, mackintosh, dungarees, overall coat, stockings, shoes or boots, and gumboots where necessary.

The majority of the Land Girls already lived in the countryside, but more than a third came from London and the industrial cities of the north of England. A separate branch was set up in 1942 for forestry industry work, officially known as the Women's Timber Corps and with its members colloquially known as "Lumber Jills" – this was disbanded in 1946. The WLA lasted until its official disbandment on 30 November 1950.

In October 2012, the Prince of Wales unveiled the first memorial to the WLA of both World Wars, on the Fochabers estate in Moray, Scotland. The sculpture was designed by Peter Naylor. In October 2014, a memorial statue to the Women's Timber Corps and both incarnations of the Women's Land Army was unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.



THE INFLUENCE OF LADY DENMAN

Lady Denman is best known for her work with the Women's Institute and its country-wide contribution to the lives of women living in the countryside. With her energetic assistance the Organisation brought so much to inspire, expand and encourage the lives of women far from the amenities which townswomen took for granted. This was especially the case during wartime. But Lady Denman also took on the organisation of the Womens' Land Army as well and became its Director during the war years. The following comes from a document she produced in 1940.

'Food must be grown in this country, farmers have ploughed their land, have sown the seed, and they must have in addition to their regular workers extra hands in the spring, summer and autumn to cultivate and to carry the crops. Much of this work can be done by local people working from home, and I am sure that Women's Institute members will be amongst the first to offer to give this help, but in some districts the available local labour will not be enough.

To help to meet this shortage the Women's Land Army Auxiliary Force for 1940 is being organized at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, and here again those Women's Institute members who can leave their homes for a few weeks can give most valuable service.

Recruits are wanted now for this new force. They are asked to enrol for at least a month or for longer if they can. Those recruits who are 18 years or over will get a minimum wage of 28s. a week. Many of them will work in groups, they may camp out in tents or in empty houses or they may be billeted with local families. They will have to pay for their board from the wages they receive.

Volunteers who can give four continuous weeks' service or longer during the coming months are asked to enrol in the Women's Land Army Auxiliary Force through the Women's Land Army committee in their county.

These volunteers need not be skilled workers: they will be wanted by farmers to undertake jobs such as planting potatoes, hoeing the fields, harvesting, picking fruit, or making hay. The work may be hard, but they will be giving a most vital and urgently needed form of national service.'



Wordsworth's poem about daffodils in the last issue prompted another example of his use of Nature as a reflection on human life. In Nature so much beauty goes unnoticed, as do those who have human qualities of love and concern for others.

**She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:**

**A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.**

**She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!**

But who was Lucy? Why was the poet so moved by her death? He does not tell us, although he usually gives some biographical information. This poem was written while Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy were on a holiday in Germany in 1798-99. What is special about this poem, which is one of five of a set of poems involving women called Lucy, is the simplicity of the language. Wordsworth's poetry is in sharp contrast to the usual highly elaborate style of the day and he is credited with being the writer who did most to replace it with a clearer and simpler verse form. We see in this short poem his careful choice of simple words and his emerging interest in the influence of Nature upon human life which became central to him in later years

Sandra Edgington does a little thinking.....
THINKING OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE BOX.

The red telephone box, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott, iconically British and recognised alongside Big Ben and the double-decker London bus throughout the world, has been a feature of the landscape for generations. However, with the arrival of the mobile phone and the Internet on the scene, they are now nearly all redundant and decommissioned.

And yet they survive!

From Lands End to John o' Groats they are still to be seen and still appreciated, albeit in many new and creative disguises, serving communities in vital and unusual ways. They have been "adopted". Perhaps the most common new usage is as an emergency service, a lifesaver, housing a defibrillator device to be a first response to cardiac arrest. BT works with many communities to enable this.

The second most common usage is as a micro library and book exchange, especially needed in those areas too far from a public library service (if such a service still exists.) No registration necessary, no fines, just a system based on trust that, by taking a book, another will be given to replace it. But that's by no means all. Many other boxes have had a variety of makeovers, some simply ingenious. Here are just a few:

A hamlet of 30 people near Inveraray boasts a "Cake in a Call Box." ...fresh cakes, homemade jams and chutneys for sale, with an Honesty Box and Visitors Book. Security provided by a field of Highland cattle!

A seaside version of this can be found near to Eastbourne Pier- the Red Box Coffee Kiosk fitted out with machines dispensing hot dogs, icecream, tea and coffee. Standing room only of course.

A Bloomsbury Square Gardens box has been fully refrigerated to deliver fresh, healthy salads to nearby office workers and students.

There is a Visitors Information box in Northumberland dedicated to the memory of the Battle of Flodden in 1513, one of the most ferocious battles ever waged between English and Scottish armies. The Kiosk contains all the visitor needs- walking maps and an audio mini-guide to the story of Flodden. And then there's 'telephone box as colour therapy room', set up by artistic residents of a Suffolk village. Over the course of a few months they created stained glass windows for each panel, reflecting aspects of nature in the local area. Artificial grass on the floor and an adjustable stool completes the Zen ambience.

A few have become Art Galleries. In Cheltenham Town centre six telephone boxes in a row (from the time when telephone boxes were grouped) serve as an outstation for the town's Art Gallery, housing arty installations, viewed through the glass. Local artists and their art become much more accessible, appreciated and, maybe, bought. Along with public libraries, village pubs are also closing at a rapid rate. The Dog and Bone in Shepreth was faced with such a fate. While the villagers awaited a more accommodating venue they got a temporary licence for a bar to be installed in their decommissioned phone box. Queues formed on a summer evening for a pint of draught.

Iconic meets ironic!

A box in Holborn, central London, has for over two years been a profitable iPhone repair shop business for a very enterprising technician. Finally, a telephone box as the world's smallest nightclub? To be found in Knightsbridge in Devon. It has 'atmos' in lights and a disco ball. Just pop a £ 1 coin in the phone and a random dance tune plays to boogie to....and all for charity.

Ingenious, creative, useful, life-saving.....with communities thinking outside the box (but also inside!) our much-beloved red telephone kiosks will be able to remain part of our urban and rural landscape.



QUIZ TIME

1. What type of creature is a SHEARWATER?
2. What is the name of the river which flows over the Victoria Falls?
3. If you book a hotel in Tallinn, in which country would you be?
4. If somebody lies under oath in court, what offence are they committing?
5. Which animals are the main characters in “Watership Down”?
6. In which sport will you find a “Southpaw”?
7. What group of companies do we associate with Richard Branson?
8. In which decade did wearing front seatbelts in cars become law in the U.K.?
9. What do the letters NIMBY stand for?
10. What was the first name of the composer Beethoven?
11. King George VI was the last Emperor of which Commonwealth country?
12. What is the nationality of Roger Federer?
13. In Swahili, what does the word “SAFARI” mean?
14. In which Continent is Swahili a national language?
15. On which racecourse is the annual St. Leger race held?
16. Which country has qualified for every football World Cup since 1930?
17. In which English county were the “Poldark” novels set?
18. What temperature on the Fahrenheit scale equals 100 degrees Centigrade?
19. What was the name of the mother of John the Baptist in the Gospel?
20. With a capacity of 67,800, which is the largest sporting stadium in Scotland?

FROM PETER FLEMING’S “Brazilian Adventure”



On a branch hanging low over the water sat a kingfisher, a tiny kingfisher, a bird so small that it seemed impossible that it should exercise the functions of a kingfisher. It was smaller than a sparrow. It had a sharp black beak and sharp black eyes, surely too small to be of any service. Its markings were gay, distinct, and contrasting, like the colours of a toy. An orange chest: dark-green back and wings, very lustrous: a black head and a neat white ring round its neck.

It looked very compact and proud, and at the same time rather absurd: like a medieval page in a new and splendid livery. As I watched, it plunged suddenly, wounding the surface of the water hardly more than a falling leaf. Then it went back to the branch, having missed its prey, and sat glaring and fussing the water out of its feathers. Failure rankled. It registered a microscopic indignation.



'Like You Would' A poem by Pam Ayres.

Well I got up in the morning,
Like you would.
And I cooked a bit of breakfast,
Like you would,
But at the door I stopped,
For a message had been dropped,
And I picked it up, and read it,
Like you would.

"Oh Blimey!" I said,
Like you would,
"Have a read of this,
This is good!"
It said : "I live across the way,
And admire you every day,
And my heart, it breaks without you"
Well, it would.

It said: "I'd buy you furs and jewels,
If I could,"
And I go along with that,
I think he should,
It said: "Meet me in the Park,
When it's good and dark,
And so me wife won't see,
I'll wear a hood."

Oh, I blushed with shame and horror,
Like you would,
That a man would ask me that,
As if I could!
So I wrote him back a letter,
Saying "No, I think it's better,
If I meet you in the Rose and Crown,
Like we did last Thursday."

THIS POEM IS NOT QUITE WHAT WORDSWORTH HAD IN MIND. BUT IT IS, I THINK WRITTEN, LIKE YOU WOULD, ABOUT LIFE AND WITH THAT IMPISH GLINT IN THE EYE OF A POET WHO IS TAKING YOU FOR A LITTLE RIDE, LIKE SHE WOULD, BEFORE SHE LETS YOU GET THE FULL STORY !

**What did our
parents do to kill
boredom before the
internet?**

**I asked my 26
brothers and
sisters and they
didn't know either.**

Pastwords



To **Blackmail** somebody is to demand money by threats, usually to expose secrets. This word, or phrase, originated in the Highlands of Scotland in the 1600s. The 'mail' in black-mail is the old Scottish word for rent, usually spelled either 'mail' or 'male', which in turn evolved from the Old Norse word 'mal' meaning agreement or contract.

In those days tenants paid their rent in silver coins which used to be known as 'white money' but in the 1600s the Highland 'clan chiefs began a protection racket, threatening farmers and traders with violence if they didn't pay to be protected from other clans.

This informal tax, or additional rent, soon became known as 'black money' or 'black rent', being the opposite of white, and so 'black-maill' became part of the language as a word used to describe the practice of obtaining money by threat of violence. During the 1900s the art of demanding money not to divulge somebody's secrets was established and the use of the word 'blackmail' extended to describe this.

Blighty is an affectionate old-fashioned term for Britain. This developed during the British Empire campaign in India and is taken from the Hindi word 'Bilayti', meaning foreigner. Empire soldiers used the term to refer to their homeland and the expression was in regular use by the time of the First World War by soldiers who talked of Britain.

I will be using extracts from a book written by Gladys about her life in the Forest of Dean. Her son, Nick has sent me a copy of the book and here I am using the biography of Gladys Duberley also provided by him.

My mother, Gladys Duberley, was born in 1911 in Cinderford. Her parents came from Longton, in the Potteries, and her two elder sisters were born there. The best source of information about her early life is her own memoirs, which are available as free downloads on my website www.nickduberley.com.

My mother's father, George Worgan, was blinded in 1917 on the Somme. He lost both eyes to a piece of shrapnel. When he came home following rehabilitation in 1918 he was set up in a small shop in Commercial Street, Cinderford. This was done by St Dunstan's, an organisation set up to help blind servicemen.

Mum spent most of her childhood in Cinderford with her parents, George and Ethel, two elder sisters, two younger sisters and, eventually, two even younger brothers. It's hard to imagine how they all fitted in to one small terraced house, especially considering that her father used the front room which opened directly on to the street for his mat making and boot-repairing business. Around 1926 the family moved to Ruardean, minus the two older girls who were now working. I think lack of money was the motivating factor. The Forest people were going through hard times as the Miner's Strike was on.

They moved to a large stone-built house which provided better accommodation, but lacked running water. Just opposite them was a large local family, the Duberleys, one of whom Percy, my mother married in 1932. Later my father set up the butcher's shop in Ruardean with his brother Eric. When she finished at East Dean Grammar School mum got a job as a teacher, starting as a trainee at Joy's Green School around 1927. Later she moved to the Plump Hill School, the buildings of which eventually became the Wilderness Centre.

My parents moved to Varnister, Ruardean not long after their marriage. They had two children in relatively quick succession; my brother John, and my sister Wendy. When her first two children were older mum went back to teaching, and worked at several local schools. Mum had often dreamed of being an actress, so, as well as being involved with the W.I., she ran the local Amateur Dramatic group based in Ruardean Village Hall.

I was born in 1955, and would have grown up with a brother Ian about 18 months older than me, but he died in infancy. John and Wendy had both left home by the time I knew anything about anything. My father died when I was 4, so for most of my childhood it was just my mother and me. Mostly mum continued working as a teacher, finishing up at Hope's Hill school, Longhope around 1977. She also worked for a couple of years in the laboratory at the Northern United Colliery just before it closed in 1965.

Mum became a member the Forest of Dean Writers' Circle in the late 1970s, and continued attending until ill-health took over.. She was encouraged to write her memoirs by several members of the group and myself. With the help of Doug McLean at the Coleford Bookshop my mother published the first part of her memoirs, "Heaven Lies About Us", in the 1980s. This provides not only charming reminiscences of her early years, but a living history of family life during and post WW1 in the Forest of Dean.



The photograph is of the Square, Ruardean



NOTE the sort of charabanc which took mum to school every day.

Advanced Motorist Test

On your left side is a 'drop off' (the ground is 36 inches below the level you are travelling on) and on your right side is a fire engine travelling at the same speed as you.

In front of you is a galloping horse, which is the same size as your car and you cannot overtake it.

Behind you is a galloping zebra. Both the horse and zebra are also travelling at the same speed as you.

What must you do to safely get out of this highly dangerous situation?

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

The American Way!

A large American Insurance Company many years ago was a leader in up-to-date office equipment. This included a machine which punched holes in a paper reel like a pianola roll.

One day a client requested a massive cover, so he was interviewed and the answers recorded on the paper reel. He heard nothing for weeks so he rang the Company and was told "No deal!"

It seems that the interviewer had been so worried by the answers the client gave that he had played the roll on his pianola that night. The tune which came out? 'Nearer My God to Thee!'

The girls in pursuit of the Great St. Trinians Train Robbery loot in the film. It is so refreshing to find girls willing to devote themselves to healthy exercise. A devotion to studying racing form means they probably know who will win the Grand National too. Harry the gardener is a reluctant also-ran, as usual.



Answer: Get off the roundabout as soon as the music stops!

The Editor has to admit that he is not what you might call an enthusiastic gardener. Besides, nowadays it seems that when you move to a new parish the vicarage has been empty and its garden has been neglected for some time.

But Rudyard Kipling has a more poetic view.

Our England is a garden
that is full of stately views,
Of borders, beds and shrubberies
and lawns and avenues,
With statues on the terraces
and peacocks strutting by;
But the Glory of the Garden
lies in more than meets the eye.



Our England is a garden,
and such gardens are not made
By singing:—'Oh, how beautiful!'
and sitting in the shade,
While better men than we go out
and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel paths
with broken dinner-knives.

Oh, Adam was a gardener,
and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work
is done upon his knees,
So when your work is finished,
you can wash your hands and pray
for the Glory of the Garden
that it may not pass away!
For the Glory of the Garden,
that it may not pass away!
And the Glory of the Garden
it shall never pass away!

There is of course another point of view as expressed by Arthur Marshall, writing in the 'Radio Times' in 1977: "Observing the ancient house-keeper wrestling with the plant-life in the garden, I occasionally point out a weed and encourage her from my deck-chair".

You might remember the rather high voice, which he used when he took on the character of the sort of difficult young lady we meet in the St. Trinians films. Every family should have an enthusiastic gardener, of course, but I have never been that paragon of digging and delving myself.

QUIZ SOLUTION

1. Bird.
2. Zambesi.
3. Estonia.
4. Perjury.
5. Rabbits.
6. Boxing.
7. The Virgin Group.
8. 1980's (January 31st. 1983)
9. Not In My Backyard.
10. Ludwig.
11. India.
12. Swiss.
13. Journey.
14. Africa.
15. Doncaster.
16. Brazil.
17. Cornwall.
18. 212 degrees.
19. Elizabeth.
20. Murrayfield.

TAILOORN

May 2024

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

WHITSUNDAY, 19th.

Bank holidays, 6TH and 27TH.



This poster appeared during World War I when the National Land Service Corps was in its infancy. Not only men, but horses were taken off the land as well. As the horse was the principal power source, this had a serious effect on food production. A great number of them were killed in action.



By 1942, farming had become mechanised. This picture is of Land Girls harvesting beet. Having myself driven a Fordson like that, I can say that it is a singularly uncomfortable machine to drive.



The Editor, Brian Phillips, may be contacted at
pastorprint@gmx.co.uk

Details of sources quoted but not acknowledged will be provided on request. Items and articles are welcome.