CO-OPERATIVE HOME MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1954

Issued by TAMWORTH INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

TAMWORTH INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

5, COLEHILL, TAMWORTH

Christmas Message from the President

I WISH to express sincere greetings for the festive season which will soon once again be here.

Our society continues to progress. 928 persons having joined since January of this year, and a sincere welcome is extended to them with the hope that they will use our various departments to the limit of their purchasing power. We also hope they will recognise that the society belongs collectively to the members as partners, not only by giving their trade but also by investing their money upon which a fair rate of interest is paid.

During the year, several of our oldest members have died, but quite a number of others have celebrated their golden weddings and a few even diamond weddings.

The secretary, on behalf of the management, has sent a letter of congratulation to these and also we have forwarded to them a suitable cake to be used in connection with their celebrations.

Our membership is over 16,000 and the annual trade is over £1 million, on this trade approximately £28,000 dividend has been paid or added to members' share accounts, and approximately £30,000 should be allocated at the end of the January, 1955, half-year. This dividend, I am sure, has been appreciated by those who have received it. It assists them, no doubt, with their financial problems.

During the year we have opened our first self-service branch in the village of Polesworth, and this should prove of great value to the members in that district. If it is successful, and we hope it will be, we may later convert other branches to this system of trade.

Dordon branch has been modernised and a new parcelling room brought into operation at the rear of our central grocery department, also an extension of the counter facilities and space at the general office has been made.

Our society is very sound financially and I am sure must be of great help to the members who loyally support it, but I still feel that more trade per week could be done, although I am appreciative of the purchasing loyalty you have given during this year.

Hoping all members will have a Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 1955, and that peace will remain on the earth and goodwill extend not only by nations of the world to one another but by individuals also, and that the great co-operative movement, of which we are but a small part, will continue to progress.

Yours sincerely,
A. Heathcote, President.

Golden Weddings

The following members have celebrated their golden wedding and received good wishes and a special anniversary cake from the society.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Titterton, 8, New Street Square, Twogates, November 4th; Mr. and Mrs. Hall, 61, Belgrave Road, Belgrave, November 9th; Mr. and Mrs. Butler, 13, Long Street, Dordon, November 12th.

Housing Repairs and Rents Act

Your local Co-operative Party has given much time and thought to this act, and from the many inquiries they have had, believe that the following 20 questions and answers will help many of our members to decide whether or not they should be called upon to pay extra rent for their house.

Twenty Questions on the 1954 Housing Repairs and Rents Act.

1. *What is the earliest date on which a repairs increase becomes payable?*

After August 30th a landlord can serve a notice of repairs to a tenant. The notice must give a date at LEAST SIX WEEKS after the date on which the notice is served from which the repairs increase will be payable. The tenant need do nothing until the landlord serves a notice of increase.

2. *How much is the repairs increase?*

The repairs increase will vary. There may be no increase at all. The maximum repairs increase is twice the statutory repairs deduction for the house for rating purposes. But the increase will be less than the maximum if :—

(a) the rent of the house is already high in relation to its rating assessment.

(b) the landlord is not responsible for all the repairs.

3. *How can I find out the statutory repairs deduction?*

There are two figures that you want to know. The gross annual value and the net rateable value. You can get both these figures for any house from the rating department. They are likely to be the same in blocks of similar houses.

The difference between the gross annual value and the net rateable value is called the statutory deduction.

4. *Is there a limit (or "stopper") to the repairs increase?*

Yes. The act provides for a limit ("stopper") of twice the gross value. If the rent of a house is already more than twice the gross value, no repairs increase at all will be payable. If the rent is below twice the gross value, but the repairs increase would bring it above, the repairs increase is to be reduced so that it makes the rent equal to twice the gross value.

5. *What if the rent includes rates?*

Rent for the purpose of the "stopper" is "net rent"—rent less any amount for rates where these are paid by the landlord and less certain other sums mentioned below.

6. *What other sums are to be excluded in calculating the "stopper"?*

(a) Any amount payable to furniture or services provided by the landlord under the terms of tenancy. If the landlord and the tenant cannot agree on this, either of them can go to the rent tribunal.

(b) Any addition made to the rent by the landlord for structural alterations or improvements, including improved fixtures and fittings. Under the Rent Acts he can increase the rent by 8 per cent per year of his expenditure on these (6 per cent for work done between 1914 and 1920).

7. *Has the house to be in good repair?*

Yes. A house must be both in good repair and fit for human habitation before a repairs increase can be claimed; and it must be kept like this.

"Good repair" means that "having regard to the age, character, and locality of the premises they are in good repair both as respects structure and as respects decoration." It should be noted that "decoration" includes internal decoration; but see also questions 16 to 17.

"Fit for human habitation" means that the house is "reasonably suitable for occupation having regard to freedom from damp; natural lighting; stability; ventilation; water supply; drainage; and sanitary conveniences; and facilities for storing, preparation, and cooking of food, and for disposal of waste water."

8. *What must the landlord do before claiming the repairs increase?*

The landlord must do three things:

(1) He must serve a notice in the proper form; and with it

(2) he must declare that the house is in good repair and fit for human habitation; and

(3) he must declare that he has satisfied the expenditure test.

In the declaration on the expenditure test the landlord must give a general description of the work carried out (for example, if he painted the outside of the house or replaced tiles on the roof), its value, and the period when it was done, so that the tenant can tell whether the claim is correct. (If the landlord makes a false declaration he is subject to penalties). A notice of increase can be served by post.

9. *What if the tenant has a lease or contract of tenancy?*

The repairs increase can take effect during the running of a lease or contract of tenancy. The landlord therefore does not need to serve a notice to quit and thus end the contractual tenancy in order to claim the repairs increase of rent.

10. *How can the tenant challenge the repairs increase?*

The tenant need do nothing until the landlord serves a notice claiming the repairs increase. If, when he gets a notice, the tenant doesn't agree that the landlord has satisfied the expenditure test, he can take action in the county court within 28 days of the notice.

But if the condition of the house is disputed, the tenant can at any time go to the local authority for a "certificate of disrepair." The tenant can ask the local authority for a certificate of disrepair as soon as the landlord serves a notice or he can go at any time later if the condition of the house so warrants.

11. *What happens if a certificate of disrepair is granted?*

The tenant should serve a copy on the landlord and then he does not have to pay the repairs increase under this act. If the tenant has been paying the 40 per cent increase permitted under the Rent Act of

1920 he does not have to pay that either. The effect of the certificate is back dated to the date the tenant applied for it and any excess rent that has been paid is recoverable.

12. *Is the decision of the local authority on a certificate of disrepair final?*

No. The landlord can challenge it by action in the county court. The tenant has also a right of redress where the local authority have refused to issue a certificate. For he can, in spite of this refusal, risk withholding the repairs increase and leave it to the landlord to take him to the county court.

In either case the onus is on the landlord to show that the house is in good repair and fit for human habitation. But obviously the landlord's case would be more difficult if he has to challenge a certificate of disrepair, whilst the tenant's case would be more difficult if a certificate has been refused.

13. *Suppose the landlord puts the house into good repair?*

When a local authority grant a certificate of disrepair they must say what the defects in the house are. If the landlord puts these right he can ask the local authority to revoke the certificate and if they do so the repairs increase will then be payable.

14. *What if the house is in disrepair through the fault of the tenant?*

The repairs increase is payable if the defects in the house are due to any act, neglect, or default by the tenant.

15. *What happens where the landlord is not responsible for all repairs?*

In such cases the expenditure test he has to satisfy—and the maximum repairs increase he can claim—is reduced proportionately. If the landlord and the tenant cannot agree on the correct proportion, either of them can apply to the county court to settle the point. The landlord is treated as being responsible for all repairs for which the tenant is under no express liability.

16. *Who is responsible for internal decoration?*

It depends on the terms on which the house is let. But where neither landlord nor tenant is under any express liability for internal decorative repair, the landlord may choose not to be treated as being responsible for it. He must do so on the form prescribed by the statutory regulations which the Minister has made.

If the landlord chooses not to be responsible for internal decoration the effect will be to reduce the repairs increase that the landlord can claim and the expenditure test that he has to satisfy by one-third. Once a landlord has chosen not to be responsible for internal decoration, he cannot change his mind and claim the full increase at some later date.

17. *Can a landlord take into account work done and paid for by the tenant?*

No. But he can include the value of any materials supplied by him and used by the tenant.

18. *Are all houses within the Rent Restrictions Act liable to a repairs increase?*

Most of them. But where a house had never been let until AFTER September 1st, 1939, there can be no repairs increase and no increase in respect of the increased cost of providing services.

19. *Can the landlord get any increase in rent for a house where the first letting was after September 1st, 1939?*

Under the new act, rent tribunals may increase the rents for these houses as well as reduce them.

20. *What houses come within the Rent Restrictions Acts?*

The Rent Restrictions Acts apply to all unfurnished houses with a rateable value of not more than £75, except:—

(1) new houses and conversions completed after the present act comes into operation; but if the conversion is carried out with the aid of an improvement grant from a local authority under the Housing Act, 1949, the Rent Restrictions Act will still apply and the local authority will fix the standard rent;
(2) lettings by local authorities, all of which now come outside the Rent Restrictions Acts;
(3) lettings by certain housing associations and trusts and by the New Town Development Corporations.

Appreciation from the Tropics

DEAR SIR,—I must apologise for not writing before, but I must thank your society very much for the beautiful cake that was sent to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. B. Probin, on their golden wedding day.

My parents sent me a slice, while I was touring Malaya. Although the climate out here is anything but pleasant, the cake arrived in perfect condition, and tasted perfect, which speaks a lot for your products, as normally food out here does not stay fresh, unless kept in a refrigerator.

So once again please accept my much delayed thanks to your society for the most excellent and thoughtful gift.

Yours sincerely,
J. PROBIN.

Promotion and Honour

The Queen has sanctioned that Miss Alice Andrews of 78, Norman Avenue, Nuncaton, be promoted Serving Sister of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Miss Andrews is superintendent of the Nuneaton nursing division of the St. John Ambulance, and has been associated with the movement since 1925.

She started as an ordinary member, and became a cadet officer when the cadet unit was started in Nuneaton in 1934; later she was appointed superintendent and held the position as ambulance officer in the nursing division before being made nursing superintendent.

Miss Andrews was made Serving Sister of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem at a ceremony held at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, on Tuesday, October 19th, by the Lord Prior, Lord Wakehurst, Governor of Northern Ireland.

Last year Miss Andrews took on the work of giving first-aid instructions to the N.H.S.R. trainees. She is employed in the tailoring department of our society.

For fragrant smokes this Christmastide, buy C.W.S. cigars, whiffs, and cigarettes.

Social Numbers

Our society for many years has helped deserving organisations and causes in many ways. One of the means used is to allocate a share number for the cause, so that individual members who have sympathy with and want to help can, when purchasing from the society, give one of these numbers instead of their own.

In the same way, the few people who are not members, but who often trade with the society, can use these numbers. The dividend on the purchases then goes via the number which has been used to the fund.

The latest number to be allocated is 5033, and this has been given to the Tamworth Old People's Social Centre Fund. The dividend on all purchases made in this number will go to the fund, which was first started in 1951 by the borough council to commemorate festival year, and has since been increased by various efforts and 50 per cent of the carnival profits.

The object is that in due course it will be possible to create a social centre, where the older folk can gather and enjoy themselves. You can help this worthy aim by using No. 5033 when making purchases.

Mr. E. Starkey

We were sorry to learn of the death of Mr. E. Starkey, coal department, who passed away suddenly on November 12th.

Mr. Starkey had only worked for the society for two years, but during that time he had been a good and conscientious employee.

The society was represented at the funeral by the chairman, Mr. A. Heathcote, and the secretary, Mr. G. A. Stock. Our sympathy is extended to the family of Mr. Starkey.

Obituary

We regret to record the deaths of the following members, and offer our sympathy to the bereaved relatives.

Florence Mabel Stilgoe, Kingsbury, October 5th; Joseph Ernest Barber, Wilnecote, October 6th; Albert W. Jennings, Dordon, October 10th; Francis Atkins, Glascote, October 10th; John W. Hudson, Polesworth, October 12th; Thomas Edward Dixon, Wilnecote, October 13th; Ann Crowley, Dordon, October 13th; William Samuel Wright, Dordon, October 14th; Albert Rushton, Wigginton, October 15th; Arthur Mason, Bodymoor Heath, October 16th; James Henry Chapman, Wilnecote, October 19th; Mary Hinds, Amington, October 19th; Eliza Wright, Fazeley, October 20th; Solomon Burkett, Dosthill, October 23rd; Alice Ellen Davies, Mile Oak, October 23rd; Alfred Lakin, Amington, October 25th; Samuel Higginbottom, Kettlebrook, October 26th; Sarah Ann Gunnell, Hall End, October 29th; Arthur Walker, Glascote, October 29th; Philip John Lea, Dordon, October 30th; Thomas Chetwynd, Dordon, November 2nd; Emily Oliver, Tamworth, November 4th; Nellie Follett, Tamworth, November 6th; Kate Perry, Dordon, November 6th; Minnie Goodwin, Tamworth, November 9th.

(For continuation of Local Matter see inside back cover)

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DEC. 1954 — Vol. 59 No. 12

THE search for happiness is the fundamental impulse behind all human activity. Many seek it in money-making. If they can only make a fortune they will be happy. That is the belief for which men have made tremendous sacrifices over long years of constant endeavour. Does money bring happiness? Usually it seems to bring little but a one-track mind, intent on piling up more and more wealth. Whether such a pursuit makes for happiness it is difficult to judge. Perhaps the answer is that it depends upon the character of the person concerned.

Others look for happiness in divers ways which have little or no connection with money, and may range from a passion for some simple hobby, to a deep devotion to some religious faith.

In all these cases, however, if material, intellectual or spiritual benefits are sought merely in a spirit of self-gratification, the results in terms of real lasting happiness are likely to be disappointing.

It is one of the paradoxes of human make-up that in spite of inevitable disappointments and frustration, the more one concentrates on fostering the well-being of others, the greater is one's personal happiness, so far as happiness can be achieved in this imperfect world.

It is undoubtedly true that "the busy man is the happy man, providing his actions spring from unselfish motives."

Voluntary service in the co-operative movement is, indeed, of a rewarding nature. Happy is the man or woman who has bent a shoulder to the common cause of the guilds, and seen them grow locally into flourishing auxiliaries. What joy there is for the trade-minded member who has fought for and won a place on a retail society's board, and lived to see his own ideas reflected in a rosy profit and loss account!

Maybe the young man or woman, trained in the Co-operative Party, sets out to put local affairs on an even keel by gaining municipal honours. By bringing comfort and happiness to others, the aldermen and councillors set the seal on their own optimistic attitudes towards life.

Interest, pleasure, and happiness. The joy of a job well done. In countless social organisations, in politics, in cultural and dramatic societies, there are men and women who seek the elixir of life.

Active in their chosen spheres, they grow not old nor embittered. Life for them is a game of absorbing interest.

The world would be a happier place if everyone were to indulge in a satisfying hobby or pastime. For those who have not yet plunged deep into active life with a social organisation, let them choose the co-operative movement. Inside the vast social framework of co-operation there is something for every adult and youth who will only stop to inquire.

A voice inside us asks: "Will they stop to inquire?" The paradox of our imperfect society is that unless we arrest the individual headlong dash of modern civilisation we can make no personal contribution to its social progress.

Science zooms onwards at the pace of the Comet. Our social framework embellishes itself at the speed of the Fabian tortoise.

If the march of invention and its associated higher standard of life is to result in the creation of communal happiness, each one of us must be ready to give our best in the spirit of voluntary service.

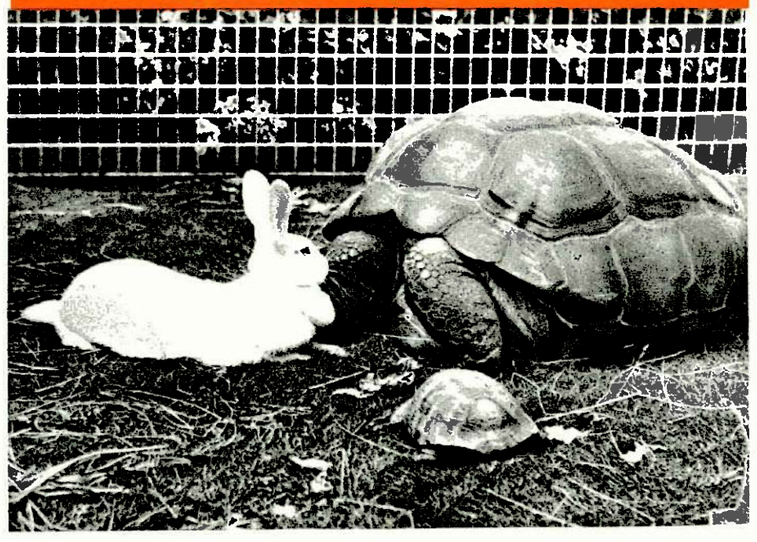
THE EDITOR.

THIS MONTH'S QUOTATION

I have lived to know that the great secret of human happiness is this: Never suffer your energies to stagnate. The old adage of "too many irons in the fire," conveys an untruth —you cannot have too many pokers, tongs—and all, keep them going.

—Adam Clark

STRANGE COMPANIONS



Buffet Refreshments for a CHRISTMAS PARTY

by Mary Langham

At party time a buffet is the best way of serving refreshments, especially in limited surroundings. The food should be easily managed on a plate or between the fingers.

Here are a few appetising, easy-to-make suggestions.

SAVOURY ROLLS

4 oz. short crust pastry, 1 tin C.W.S. Waveney herrings, C.W.S. tomato chutney, salt and pepper, 1½ oz. white breadcrumbs.

Mix together the herrings, chutney, bread-crumbs, and seasoning to taste. Make the pastry and roll into a long narrow strip about 4 in. wide. Roll out the savoury filling until as long as the pastry; place on the pastry. Wet the edge of the pastry and roll round the filling. Cut into small rolls. Brush with egg and bake in a No. 5 or 400 F. oven for 15-20 minutes.

DEVILS-ON-HORSEBACK

Small rashers of bacon, prunes, almonds, salt, cayenne pepper, watercress, fried bread.

Stew prunes, remove the stones, and stuff with salted almonds. Roll the bacon round the prunes and stick a skewer through the centre. Grill and serve on fried bread garnished with watercress.

CREAM JELLY

1 pint C.W.S. jelly (any flavour), ½ pint C.W.S. Wheatsheaf evaporated milk.

Make up the jelly as directed on the packet and allow to become almost set. Whisk the evaporated milk until it thickens slightly, pour the jelly into it slowly and continue to beat until thick and frothy. Pour into sundae glasses.

FREE KITCHEN SERVICE

Advice on any cookery problem is offered free of charge to "Home Magazine" readers. Address questions to Mary Langham, "Co-operative Home Magazine," 1, Balloon Street, Manchester, 4, and enclose stamped addressed envelope

PINEAPPLE JELLY

1 C.W.S. pineapple jelly, 1 small tin C.W.S. Wheatsheaf evaporated milk, 1 small tin crushed pineapple.

Strain the tin of crushed pineapple and make the juice up to ½ pint with cold water. Make up the pineapple jelly with the ½ pint of juice and leave to cool. Whip the evaporated milk until it is very thick and frothy, and also whip the cold jelly in the same way. Mix the two together, folding in the crushed pineapple. Pour into sundae glasses and leave in a cool place to set. Decorate with cherries and angelica or walnuts.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CAKE

In response to many requests from readers, we have pleasure in publishing Mary Langham's Special Christmas Cake recipe.

4¼ oz. C.W.S. Federation S.R. flour, 4½ oz. C.W.S. Silver Seal margarine, 4½ oz. demerara sugar, 1 oz. C.W.S. ground almonds, 4 eggs, 6 oz. C.W.S. sultanas, 6 oz. C.W.S. raisins, 14 oz. C.W.S. currants, 2 oz. C.W.S. glace cherries, 2 oz. C.W.S. mixed peel, 1 teaspoon C.W.S. mixed spice.

Cream together margarine and sugar until smooth and soft. Beat in eggs and stir in flour, mixed spice, and ground almonds. Add fruit, cherries, and peel. Put into a greased and lined 8 in. cake tin, and bake in a No. 3 (350 F.) oven for 1 hour and No. 1 (300 F.) for a further ¾-1 hour. Allow to cool, store in an air-tight tin for a few days.

COCO-NUT MACAROONS

4 oz. castor sugar, 2 egg whites, 3½-4 oz. C.W.S. desiccated coco-nut, rice paper, cochineal if desired.

Put small squares of rice paper on a baking sheet. Whisk the egg whites and sugar over hot water until mixture is thick enough to support its own weight. Fold in the coco-nut and drop spoonfuls on the rice papers. Bake in a very slow oven, No. 2 or 325 F., until firm but not brown. If colouring is added this should be done at the eggs-and-sugar whisking stage.

ALMOND ICING

¾ lb. icing sugar, ¾ lb. C.W.S. ground almonds, 2 egg whites, 1 egg yolk, juice of ½ lemon, ½ teaspoon C.W.S. almond essence, ½ teaspoon C.W.S. vanilla essence.

Mix icing sugar and ground almonds, add lemon juice and essences, and mix to a stiff paste with the eggs. Knead thoroughly before using. Brush top and sides of cake with either sieved apricot jam or egg white. Dust a pastry-board with icing sugar and roll out a piece of almond icing into a round the size of the top of the cake. Place it in position, press down, and roll flat. Roll a strip of almond icing long enough to go round the cake and the depth of the cake. Place round the cake and join the top and sides neatly. Allow to dry several days before covering with icing.

ROYAL ICING

1¼ lb. icing sugar, 2 egg whites, 1 teaspoon lemon juice OR 2 or 3 drops acetic acid, colouring if required.

Sieve sugar several times to ensure freedom from lumps. Beat egg whites, then stir in sugar and lemon juice. Beat thoroughly until smooth and white. Cover with a damp cloth until required. Put the cake on a cake-board and decorate with icing according to taste.

How the SWISS keep CHRISTMAS

by LILIAN GRAY

IT always comes as something of a surprise when Swiss friends tell one they do not "celebrate" Christmas, for a great percentage of them are fundamentally deeply religious, either Protestant or Roman Catholic. But therein lies the reason, for to them Christmas Day is a *holy* day, and is quietly kept as such. They are apt to be shocked at the way we tend to spend it over here—large family gatherings, much eating and drinking, and sometimes hilarious evening parties carrying on until the early hours of the morning.

This is not to say, however, that no jollifications take place in the Christmas season over there. They are more scattered than ours are, that is all. For in Switzerland the first of the Christmas "junketings" begins on December 6th, the day given over to homage to Saint Nicholas—the same benign old gentleman, with the long white beard and fur-trimmed red cloak and hood, whom we call Father Christmas.

Why Saint Nicholas was ever chosen to be the festival's patriarch not even students of his life can really say, unless it be that he was a man renowned for giving presents away and is, among other things, patron saint for little children. He is therefore a most suitable figure to represent the spirit of Christmas and on his day, in some of the Swiss towns, men go round as mummers, garbed in queer fantastic guise, and dance in his honour in equally fantastic style.

Nearer the 25th the young people take charge of things, as it were, by organising

A farmer's son on his way to the Winter Sports with a sleigh made and carved by himself

Carol singing round the Christmas Tree in an Alpine chalet

"star singing" groups and processions—something similar to our own carol singers, but rather more realistically carried out. Girls wearing long white dresses, with wing-shaped sleeves, follow a leader carrying a large, five-pointed, gilded Star of Bethlehem, and as they walk around the town or village, they sing Christmas hymns.

The boys get themselves up as the Three Kings—Melchior, Gaspar, and black-faced Balthazar—and entourage. Balthazar wears a turban, as befits a gentleman from a far eastern country, but the others wear "golden" crowns. All three, of course, are most regally robed! The boys also go round singing, and in hilly and mountainous districts tramp miles in the snow visiting isolated chalets and farmhouses. Into these they are usually asked, and given "goodies" to eat, and drinks.

Which brings us to what we over here consider an important part of Christmas: food! Like us, the Swiss have a traditional mid-day dinner, but instead of turkey it is roast goose, followed by oranges, raisins, and nuts. With it all goes some good Swiss wine. But this, after church in the morning, is the only "extra" on Christmas day, so far as the adults are concerned. If it seems somewhat of an austere festival for adults, however, it is not so for the children, for they have their Christmas tree, gaily lit up and decorated, its roots buried with thrilling presents. They also have their "Christmas Cribs," and these perhaps give them as much delight as anything, for most of the children make their own.

A Sylvester mummer, taking part in a New Year's Eve procession

First there is the Manger to be fashioned, and covered with greenery, to which is added, of course, a Star. Then little figures—the Holy Mother, The Child, St. Joseph, worshipping shepherds, and perhaps the Three Kings, to be collected together, as well as diminutive oxen and sheep to cluster round the tiny Crib. The whole is put on a special table set aside for the purpose, and friends and neighbours come in to admire and praise.

Not all Switzerland is snow-covered at Christmas time, but at the higher altitudes, where deep snow is the normal accompaniment of winter, the work of coping with it goes on uninterruptedly. Animals have to be taken from their shelter every day and watered; logs must be felled and brought down from the mountains; water fetched from the village pump—which, though it looks like one, is not really a pump at all but a local spring, piped for constant flowing.

As compensation for much labour, though, there are the joys of ski-ing and skating, and during the school holidays there is much toboganning by the children. One of the first things a boy learns to do is to make his own sleigh!

Lest all this may have painted a rather dull picture of Christmas as spent by the Swiss, let me hasten to add that you should see them at "Sylvester"—New Year's Eve. Then they *really* let themselves go!

GARGANTUAN FEASTS of Olden England

by Arthur Nettleton

Picture by courtesy of Picture Post Library

FEASTING has long been a part of our Christmas celebrations, but for examples of really gargantuan Yuletide banquets you must look back to the Middle Ages. Our castles and manor houses were the setting for repasts of immense size at that time.

Not only did monarchs, barons, and manor lords entertain their personal friends lavishly, but " open house " was the custom. Humbler folk flocked to the castles and great halls, and the festivities continued until well into the New Year.

In 1213 King John entertained his Christmas guests to a mammoth spread consisting of no fewer than 40 oxen, 200 deer, 420 wild boars, 5,000 fowls, 500 sheep, and 15,000 herrings, to say nothing of immense quantities of wine and ale.

The dishes required no less than 50 lb. of pepper, and the huge banquet was laid out in the Hall of Rufus—the part of Westminster Palace built by William II, which was the noblest banqueting hall in Britain at that period.

King John was so delighted with the success of this affair that he had it repeated in 1214.

Henry III, not to be outshone by his predecessor, kept Yuletide in equal style on several occasions. In 1248 he commanded that as many poor people as Westminster Palace would hold were to be feasted there every day from Christmas Day to New Year's Day.

Richard III was another sovereign who believed in entertaining right royally at this season. He arranged a huge banquet at Yuletide, 1398, to celebrate the renovation of the banqueting hall.

In addition to a sumptuous repast for 10,000 people, there were daily jousting matches and other manly sports. Each day at least 28 oxen were consumed, and 300 servants were needed to serve the guests.

The affair was attended by bishops, barons, knights, and other notabilities, and Richard came wearing a splendid coat embellished with pearls and gems. The garment was valued at £2,000—a big sum in those days.

Windsor Castle, too, has seen some spectacular Christmas spreads. Queen Marguerite, second wife of Edward I, spent her first English Yuletide there in 1239, and the list of provisions needed for the occasion reveals that the tables were loaded with all manner of extravagant dishes.

Paintings still preserved at Windsor show how unstinted were the banquets at this feudal fortress in the Middle Ages. They depict the ceremonial entry of the main dish carried on a golden platter (so big that four men were needed to hold it aloft), followed by other dishes borne by more servants.

A particularly notable Christmas at Windsor was that of 1330, when Edward III entertained his mother, Queen Isabella. He seems to have spared neither effort nor money to ensure the success of the affair.

Barons up and down Britain similarly made merry in great style each December, entertaining all and sundry in their castles. Some of the most lavish of these feasts were held by the Earl of Warwick at Middleham Castle, Wensleydale.

His retinue was so huge that even for a normal breakfast six oxen were needed, and the Christmas banquets were on the same colossal scale. It is recorded that at some of these feasts 30,000 people were entertained during the three weeks immediately after Christmas Day!

But what is thought to have been the biggest Yuletide banquet ever held in Britain took place at Cawood Castle, a few miles from Selby, in 1465. In its heyday this place was the palace of the Archbishops of York, and they entertained in a way that rivalled royal feasts.

The menu in 1465 included over 100 oxen, six wild bulls, 1,000 sheep, 300 calves, 300 pigs, and thousands of pigeons, geese, and pheasants. More than 2,000 cooks and kitchen hands were needed to prepare the great repast.

As to individual dishes served up at this season, one of the biggest was a pie prepared for Sir Henry Grey in 1770. It took four bushels of flour, 20 lb. of butter, four pigeons, four rabbits, seven blackbirds, four geese, two turkeys, six snipe, and two curlews.

No wonder it had to be brought in on wheels, for it weighed more than 200 lb. and was nine feet round. It required two men to lift it.

The old trenchermen would doubtless have regarded our present-day Christmas dinners as mere snacks. But in preparing their great feasts they had the use of far bigger kitchens than we have to-day. Vast fireplaces, literally large enough to roast an ox, can still be seen in some of our historic homes. They are reminders of the lavish entertaining which went on there in the past—especially at Christmas.

The gatehouse of Cawood Castle, near Selby. This stronghold was the scene of the biggest Yuletide banquet ever held in Britain. Picture at the top of the page is from an old print of Henry VII keeping Christmas in Westminster Hall

Bells will salute the Happy Morn

by HERBERT WALTERS

WHEREVER Christmas is celebrated, December 25th is marked by the ringing of bells. In the Christmas Day radio programmes one can hear the bells of many lands, including the famous bells of Bethlehem which ring out from the ancient Church of the Nativity in the Holy City.

Here in Britain church and cathedral bells are still rung by hand, and every town and village has its skilled ringers. The art of bell-ringing has been practised for so long in this country that the term " ringing the changes " has become part of our common speech.

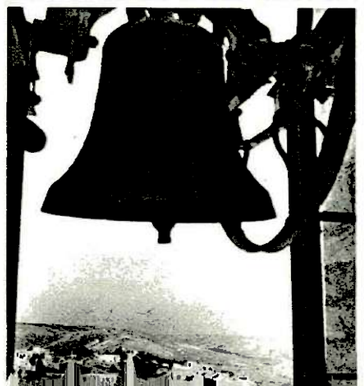
Elsewhere in the world, however, the Christmas bell music is played on carillons. These are sets of tuned bells, hung in a tower, which have wire attachments and can be operated either from a keyboard of levers or by automatic tune-playing mechanism.

The Netherlands and Belgium are the real home of the carillon—"klok-kenspel" to the Dutch—which has been known there for at least 500 years. But in recent times it has spread far and wide, especially in North America and the British Commonwealth.

Modern carillons contain peals of bells numbering anything from 25 to about 70, and are modelled on the centuries-old instruments of the great Dutch bell-masters.

All over Holland the lofty bell-towers are striking features of the towns and flat countryside. In Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Middelburg, and other picturesque old cities are historic carillons which happily survived both world wars. Many of these carillons date from the 17th century when Dutchmen were casting the world's first properly-tuned bells.

Dutch people take a keen pride in their bells, and frequent recitals, particularly at Christmas-time, are given by skilled *carillonneurs*. Most carillons on the Continent are equipped with the automatic tune-player which plays different tunes at the divisions of the hours. Usually a long tune is played at the half-hours, a shorter one at the quarters, and just a bar or two of melody at the half-quarters.

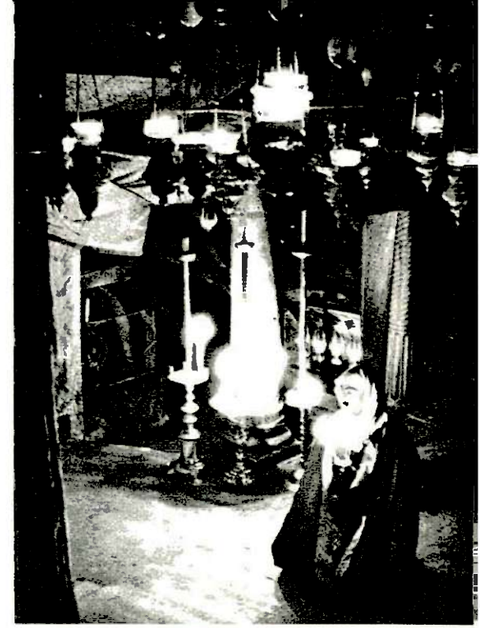


Chime-barrels, as they are called, consist of cast-iron cylinders furnished with a pattern of tiny holes. Metal pins are fixed into the holes according to the tunes selected, and as the cylinder revolves the pins operate levers connected by wires to the bells higher up the tower.

Some chime-barrels of the Low Countries are very large and most complicated to set, because anything up to about 80,000 notes may be played in the course of 24 hours. The world's largest chime-barrel, which is part of the famous Bruges carillon, has more than 30,000 pin-holes, and weighs several tons. It takes a man two or three days to change the pins for a new set of tunes.

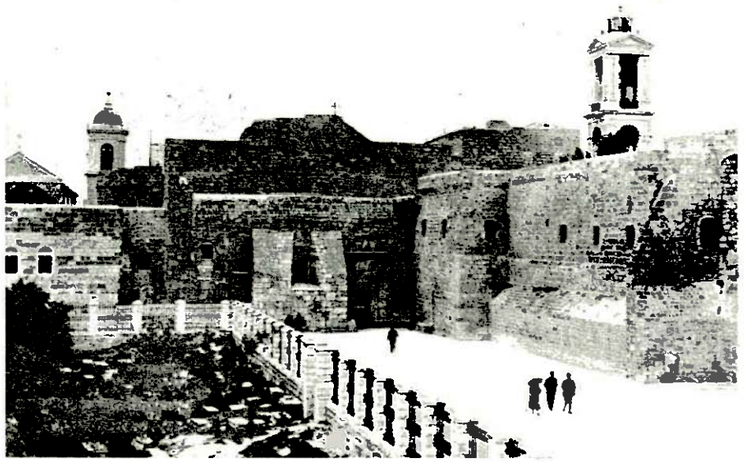
Nowhere has the carillon become more popular in modern times than in America. Since the first was sent from a well-known English foundry at Loughborough to the Portuguese Church at Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1922, about 70 of these " singing towers " (as Americans call them) have been set up in the United States. Canada has eight modern carillons, all of them from the three English bell foundries at Loughborough, Croydon, and Whitechapel.

The old custom of ringing bells to call people to church began in Italy sometime during the fifth century A.D. This led to the erection of bell-towers as an architectural feature, apart from the churches themselves, and during the Middle Ages such wonderful specimens as the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa and St. Mark's Campanile at Venice came into being.



A worshipper in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem kneels in prayer before the spot where, according to tradition Jesus of Nazareth was born

The Church of the Nativity and, below left, a view of Bethlehem from the bell tower



March of the toys...

by ARTHUR LEDGER

THE toy season is in full swing again. Every year sees something new added to the list. Cowboy guns and outfits vie with the latest type of space gun and space equipment, and for the girls every year produces new miniature household appliances that actually work.

Some of the new types of toys stay popular and may well be bought in years to come. For others, life is brief. They have a month of glory and then vanish before the marble season starts.

Many of the toys destined for Christmas stockings have been the playthings of children for centuries. Balls, not always round, often very heavy, are among the earliest known. In the British Museum is a heavy stone ball about 5,000 years old. From Egyptian tombs have come balls of rushes. As long ago as 300 B.C. woollen balls were used by children.

Babies have always, apparently, had to be entertained. Perhaps in far-off days they had to be content with bones. But clay and earthenware rattles containing pebbles were used 4,000 years ago.

The ancestors of model animals have been found in ancient burial places. The early ones were of clay. Later, metal and wood were more popular.

Dolls seem to have been favourites with girls over many hundreds of years. They, too, have been found in Egyptian tombs and were known in many forms throughout the races of the ancient world. Some of them were crude and would look out of place among the almost life-like dolls on sale to-day. On the other hand, some were elaborately dressed and decorated.

L'Emigrette was a toy in vogue at the time of the French Revolution. It made a come-back in England a few years ago as the Yo-yo

Dolls' houses, however, are fairly new. Although developed in Germany in the 17th century they were too elaborate and costly for any except the rich. It was not until the 19th century that they became common for children.

Of still more recent origin, and still very popular, is the golliwog. Coloured dolls were not unusual but "Golly" himself was not invented until 1895. He originated as the hero of a book about dolls.

Perhaps because of their cuddlesome qualities, bears—standing, sitting, or on wheels—are old toys. Yet the teddy bear itself did not come on the scene until 1903. He was a brown bear with movable limbs and was named after the American President Theodore Roosevelt. "Teddy" was the President's nickname.

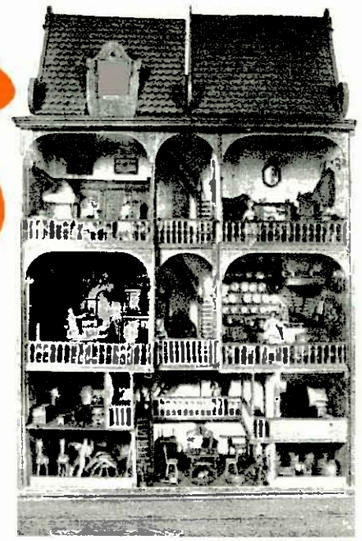
Toy soldiers are now less popular than tanks and aeroplanes. Originally these

Novelty is always the aim of the toymakers. This Victorian example combined the ever-popular rocking-horse with the tricycle

model warriors were made in silver and gold and were too expensive for children to play with. In the 18th century tin soldiers were introduced. Like many other toys they came from Germany.

Like many other toys, too, they became as popular with adults as with children. Indeed their older admirers took them much more seriously, and to-day the collecting of toy soldiers is a world-wide hobby. In England it is guided by the British Model Soldier Society.

Mechanical toys are older than might be thought. Hundreds of years ago jointed models worked by pulling a string were common. In the British Museum is a wooden model of a man



An elaborate three-storey doll's house of the 17th century, now in the German National Museum at Nurnburg

(Illustrations: Picture Post Library)

who can be made to rub dough up and down a board by pulling a piece of string fastened to his body. He was made in Egypt about 2,000 B.C.!

But more ingenious were those toys depending on air, water, sand, and heat for their actions.

In the 18th century the invention of clockwork increased the toy designer's scope. Music-playing models were common. Dolls that could dance, walk, and curtsy were the forerunners of to-day's model babies.

Perhaps the most famous in a period of fantastic mechanical toys was a large duck. It became well known throughout Europe and drew huge crowds in London.

The duck was quite lifelike. It flapped its wings and quacked. Most amazing was that it stretched out its neck and swallowed corn thrown to it. The corn was actually digested by the duck with the aid of a chemical solution in its inside!

The 19th century was a century of industrial development. Above all was the growth in importance and popularity of the railways. They soon began to fascinate young and old. It was obvious that models would become popular toys.

The first model trains appeared in the 1830s and were made of wood. Their journeys were made on 30 in. of line.

To-day the electrically-operated railway systems are often perfect scale models of the real thing. And how fathers long for the day when their sons are old enough to move on to electric trains! In many households on Christmas Day the boys will play with their space helmets and guns or cowboy outfits while father spreads himself on the floor, controller of his own railway system at last!

The Problem Picture

a short story by JOHN UPTON

"RUN down to Holmbury St. Mary, Frank, and get that feller Caprini to talk about the picture. The Chief thinks we're falling down on it. I agree with him. So if you value your skin, get something, and make it good."

Don Hathaway pulled towards him a pile of galley proofs, lit a cigarette without knowing it, took up his blue pencil, and forgot my existence. News Editors are like that.

"There isn't a paper in this country that has got a word out of the so-and-so. And you expect me—". Hathaway shrugged his shoulders without looking up. I slammed his door and cursed the day I became a reporter. Reporters are like that, too.

If only I'd kept my big mouth shut in the Cogers the previous night I might not have got that sticky assignment. A cute bird, Don. He and I were standing together at the long bar. Off-duty we were close friends. We had been talking about the problem picture that had just provided a nine days wonder for the art world and a lot of copy for newspapers which, with their usual skill, had whipped up public excitement about this "sensational" painting by the young artist whose name had now become a household word. How far a certain titled patron of the arts had assisted in the sudden rise to fame of his protégé, and why, was perhaps as big a mystery as the subject of the picture itself.

It was a large canvas. A nude girl was portrayed walking from a sombre barn-like building. A vivid shaft of sunlight shining through a gap in heavy clouds illuminated the figure so brilliantly as to make it seem almost three dimensional. The features were not beautiful in the usually accepted sense, but the whole figure had an undefinable radiance that gave an impression of beauty far beyond any ordinary analysis; a beauty that could be felt rather than seen.

As the smiling long-limbed girl strode forward confidently in the blinding rays of the sun she was totally unconscious of the overhanging edge of the dark stagnant pool directly in her path.

In the dark shadows beyond the brilliant sunlight a hideously repulsive shape like a huge ugly toad rose from the slimy water of the pool. Saliva dripped from its cavernous mouth as it waited for its happy, unsuspecting victim.

"Just a bit of old-fashioned melodrama," Don argued as he ordered another drink. "Girl leaves home, leads the gay life, comes to a bad end, that sort of thing. Quite well done, but beyond that, doesn't mean a thing to anybody."

"I'm not so sure, Don," I said. "You see, I know the girl in the picture."

*

When she opened the door of her third floor flat in a drab Chelsea street and I explained who I was, she hesitated before inviting me into a small but tastefully furnished room. At once I felt that indescribable charm of her masterful personality.

She knelt on the hearth-rug to stir the smouldering fire into a blaze. Carefully adding a few pieces of coal with a pair of shining brass tongs, she looked up at me, sadly I thought. "Of course, you don't expect me to say anything about the picture, do you?" she said. It dawned on me then. It was those deep blue, almost purple, eyes that were the secret

of her fascination. I felt like a schoolboy being told to behave.

"No," I replied, "I don't expect that."

"Then why have you come to see me?" she asked, rising from her knees and taking a low chair by the fire.

"I want to take you to Holmbury St. Mary."

She started as though I had struck her. For a moment I thought I had gone too far, and that she was going to tell me to mind my own business and leave her. Then those expressive eyes clouded and for some time she sat silently gazing into space. I knew I had guessed aright. I could almost see her pride struggling with her love for the man who had so ill-treated her. It was obviously difficult for her to forget his cruel accusation that she had been unfaithful to him, and his callousness in turning her out of their studio home in the Surrey hills. Even worse, in a mad fit of unreasoning jealousy he had painted, and publicly exhibited a picture, the diabolical meaning of which she was able to interpret only too well. I did not interrupt her thoughts.

At length she turned to me with a half-shy smile. "Very well, I'll come with you," she said simply.

★

I knocked on the old nail-studded door. In a few moments it was flung wide open and Caprini stood there glaring angrily. "I suppose you are another of those confounded reporters. You can go to the devil." He reached for the door to swing it in my face.

"I have a message from Helen," I said quietly. His arm stopped in mid-air, as though he were frozen to a statue.

"From Helen," he repeated, staring stupidly.

"Yes, can I come in," I replied. He stood aside for me to enter.

The interior was little altered from its original form as an old wooden barn. A few half-finished canvases hung from the cross beams. An easel carrying a picture on which he was working stood under a large newly-installed roof-light. He led me to two folding chairs near an enclosed stove with a large pipe leading out through the wall. Caprini was wearing a duffle coat for warmth as he worked. He opened a corner-cupboard.

"Will you have a drink. Or do you prefer tea?" "Tea, please," I said.

We talked. At least, I talked and he listened. Tactfully, I attempted to convince him of his two appalling mistakes; his great injustice in suspecting Helen's faithfulness and his unfortunate judgment in painting such a picture for all the world to see. I pointed out the danger that others may discover the facts of his quarrel with Helen and reach the same conclusions as I in seeking the picture's hidden meaning.

As the cold winter sunshine faded, the pale orange glow which flooded the studio slowly dissolved and cast deepening grey shadows around us, Caprini at last admitted sorrowfully how foolish he had been in wrecking Helen's happiness and his own.

"I must find her at once. I will beseech her to forgive me and return to me. I will burn that wretched picture." Temperamentally he paced to and fro across the studio.

I went to the door and waved to the car waiting a short distance along the tree-lined road, then picked up my hat and left Caprini sitting with his head in his hands in the gathering gloom. There were unshed tears in Helen's eyes as I stood aside to let her pass along the narrow pathway towards the open door. Behind me as I hurried to my car I heard Caprini's excited cry of welcome.

★

In the village I stopped to telephone the office. "Where the deuce have you been all day?" growled Hathaway. "It's to be hoped you've got a good line, or else!"

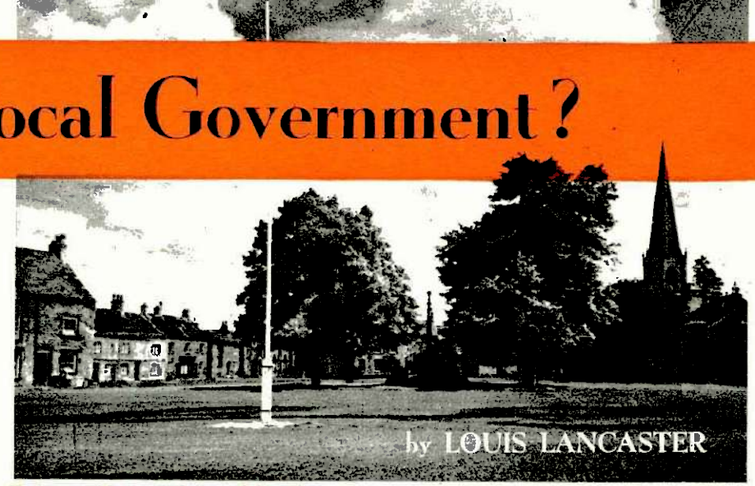
"Oh, not so bad," I replied. "See you in an hour or so. G'by."

As I drove through the darkness towards London I wondered how much, or how little, I could put into my story. You can be far too sentimental in my job.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

1. Bacon, Jam, Salt, Sugar, Egg. Ham.
2. Cheshire, Nantwich, salt mine.
3. A staircase.
4. You can't because 142 is an even number.

Whither Local Government?



by LOUIS LANCASTER

Masham, with a population of less than 2,000, is a rural district with as much power as Easington, population 82,000

LOCAL government is in ferment. All the national associations of local authorities have had their say on the future role of town and county hall. Political parties, academics, professional organisations, and trade unions have added their voices to the clamour. Are we satisfied with local government as it is? Is a radical alteration of the existing structure required or is it sufficient merely to amend the size and functions of authorities while preserving the present pattern?

Let us run our eyes for a moment over the local government set-up in England and Wales, outside London. (Scotland has its own system and the government of Inner London is vested in the London County Council, the 28 metropolitan boroughs, and the City Corporation—a two-tier organisation peculiar to the capital.)

Top of the structure in power and influence are the 83 all-purpose county boroughs and the 61 county councils. The county boroughs, responsible for all the services within their areas, are independent of the county system. Within the counties a two-tier or a three-tier system operates. In the second tier, termed county districts, are the non-county boroughs (310 of these), the urban districts (570), and the rural districts (475). The rural districts are themselves divided into parishes, the third tier of local government, with a parish council or a parish meeting in charge of minor local affairs.

There are many anomalies in the system. The much-prized status of a county borough has been denied to some large towns, Luton and Ilford among them, because their secession from the county would undermine that body's income from the rates. County boroughs in fact vary greatly in size, from Birmingham with a population of over a million to tiny Canterbury with only 28,000. Since 1949 a town must have 75,000 residents before it can ask for county borough status. The figure was 100,000 in 1945, 75,000 in 1926, and 50,000 in 1888. Because the minimum figure was lower in the past there are 20 county boroughs to-day with populations below the 75,000 needed as a preliminary to new applications for county borough rank.

On the test of population absurdities abound. What can you make of a situation in which Ealing (population 187,000) and Montgomery (900) are non-county boroughs; Harrow (220,000) and Newcastle Emlyn (786) are urban districts; and Easington (82,000) and Masham (1,721) are rural districts?

The services that a local authority performs are related to its status. In theory a county borough or county council is capable of performing all the major local government services. Education, the care of children, the welfare of old people, town and country planning, and the local health authority service are functions which are exclusive to county boroughs and county councils. It is obvious that for efficient working these have to be organised on a large scale. It is equally clear that a county borough or a county council that is short of finance cannot provide comprehensive services. A penny rate in Radnor brings in £500. In Middlesex the product of a penny rate is £90,900. While Middlesex has many more people for whom it must provide services, its overhead costs, on a unit basis, are less.

The major human social service administered by the county districts is housing. The prospect of being limited in debate to the administration of refuse collection, sanitation, street lighting, cemeteries and the like, may deter the best brains from participating in local government at district level. It is particularly galling for those who live in districts which, on population and rateable value, are equivalent to or better off than certain county boroughs and county councils.

The crucial question is—how are we to establish efficient units of local government, sustained by adequate finance, and providing sufficient services to create public interest, the whole to be undertaken without an undue sacrifice of local democracy?

One solution, proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission, was the division of larger counties and the combination of smaller counties to produce populations of between 200,000 and one million. Within the counties, the county boroughs (no longer independent) would lose certain services, including fire, police, and civil defence, to the counties. The large cities, with populations between 200,000 and 500,000, would become all-purpose county councils.

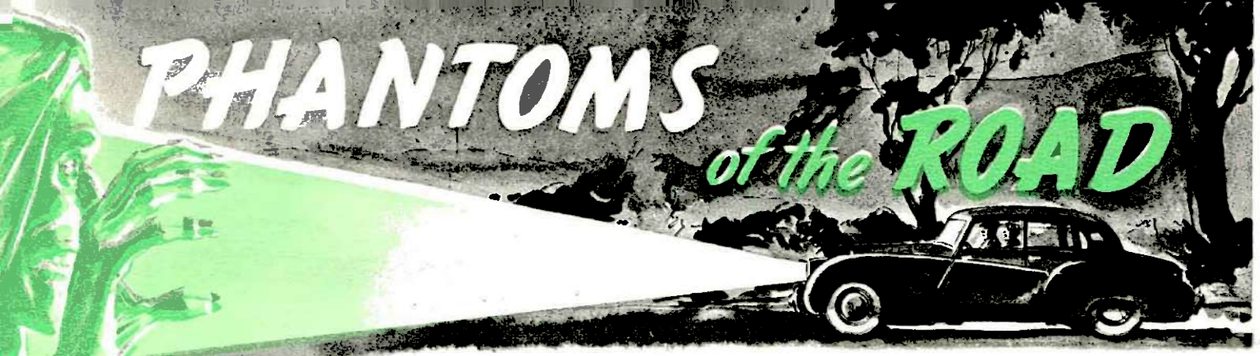
The latter proposal is the most interesting, being an attempt to deal with the industrial and urban conurbations in which local government boundaries have become artificial.

The Co-operative Party, on the other hand, plumped this year for a wide increase of the one-tier, all-purpose authorities. County councils would be retained only where necessary, existing county boroughs would be increased in area, and new county boroughs created. In rural areas, there would be area authorities, with the powers of county boroughs, to supervise the activities of district councils.

The County Councils Association, not surprisingly, is fairly well satisfied with the present structure. In a joint report, however, with the national organisations of the urban districts, rural districts, and parish councils, the four associations demanded that the county boroughs with less than 75,000 population should become non-county boroughs and only towns of 100,000 population should be entitled to apply for county borough rank.

The Association of Municipal Corporations takes the opposite view and considers that towns of 50,000 population are a suitable minimum size for county borough government. A choice sentence is its criticism of the county councils: "The two-tier system . . . leads to frustration, friction, and delay."

Never have there been so many divided counsels. It is vital for the future of local government and the development of existing services that some decision is made soon; for a vigorous system of local government is a bedrock of democracy.



by LESLIE E. WELLS

CHRISTMAS-TIME is ghost time. Each Yuletide we listen to stories about haunted castles, inns, and manor houses; now phantoms of a more modern kind are making themselves known. Our modern highways are scoured from end to end, both day and night, by motorists, lorry-drivers and other road users who give more and more accounts of Britain's haunted roads.

For instance, a well-founded ghost story concerns the Black Lady of Wensleydale, Yorkshire, who haunts a section of the road connecting Aysgarth with the village of Woodhall, on the opposite side of the River Ure. The most mystifying thing about her is the fact that, so far as is known, nothing ever occurred in the vicinity to account for the haunting.

She is always seen wearing the same clothes: a black dress in the fashion of the last century, a coloured bonnet of the same period, and a pair of white gloves to complete her outfit. In her hand she invariably carries a walking-stick.

So life-like is she that many people have spoken to her, having no idea that there was anything supernatural about her, and it is said that on one occasion a cyclist who was a stranger to the district actually dismounted and asked her if she could direct him to the nearby village of Redmire. Fortunately, perhaps, for those concerned, she cold-shoulders all who address her.

Many people are convinced that they have seen the ghost of Dick Turpin, mounted on his famous mare, riding alongside the A5—commonly known as Watling Street—at a point some seven miles south-east of Atherstone in Warwickshire. This lonely stretch of road was once a favourite waylaying spot of Turpin's, and it would seem that every so often the highwayman gallops back from limbo on Black Bess to take a look at the present-day traffic.

Two of his best authenticated appearances occurred in 1926 and 1927, when he was seen by a mixed company of road users, including lorry drivers, motorists, cyclists, and motor-cyclists.

Likewise, in 1939—exactly 200 years after he was hanged at York—Turpin was seen at the same spot by a London commercial traveller motoring north in company with a hitch-hiking soldier.

On these occasions the highwayman was described as wearing the traditional three-cornered hat and a coat with scarlet sleeves.

On the road between Blandford and Salisbury, drivers report that at a certain point they have heard screams and groans. One motorist declares that he saw the ghostly face of a dead man staring up at him from the road. Another fainted when a bloody hand crept round his shoulder and gripped the steering wheel.

These amazing happenings caused such public interest that the Bristol press made inquiries, and a big flood of correspondence revealed that a motor accident had taken place at the very spot where many people had seen these apparitions.

Surprisingly, a phantom motor coach has been seen by numerous people travelling along the Lamberhurst-Frant road in broad daylight, though it quickly disappears as one approaches it. On the Watford by-pass you are quite likely to meet a ghost car, but when it comes into the glare of your headlights, it proves to be no more than a skeleton wreckage, and if you stop, with your hair standing on end, the apparition dissolves like a wraith of mist.

There is a road near Camelford, Cornwall, where the midnight traveller may see the baffled and terror-stricken Tregeagle stagger, howling, to his bed in the bogs of Bodmin moors, after another of his futile evenings at Dozmare Pool.

Tregeagle was, in his earthly existence, the harsh steward of a local landowner, who was greatly given to grinding the faces of the poor. When at last he died, his spirit was condemned to go every night to the lake known as Dozmare Pool—that deep basin of water into which, tradition has it, King Arthur flung his sword "Excalibur"—and try to empty it with a colander. Tregeagle has been at it for over 200 years. It is said there are too many holes in the colander and that's why he howls so much.

Many road users claim that they have seen a spectre who rides a motor cycle and crashes in the most realistic manner on a lonely stretch of road between Pontypool and Usk. The wraith appears regularly at about 11 o'clock at night and shows a brilliant white light.

London, too, has its phantom vehicle. The legend of the ghostly bus of North Kensington has been going strong for years. On certain nights, after the regular bus service has stopped, people have been awakened by the noise of a bus racing down Cambridge Gardens. The vehicle is usually brilliantly lit, but has no driver or passengers. On reaching the junction of Cambridge Gardens and St. Mark's Road it disappears.

Sometimes the appearance of a highway ghost predicts tragic events, and at least one motorist has found this to be the case. He was a Russian count who was driving from Edinburgh to Worthing in a large open sports car a few years before the war. It was a good road and he was travelling fast, when suddenly he realised that he was being overtaken by a huge white car driven by a man wearing white racing overalls with a fur collar. As the car flashed past he recognised the driver.

It was a friend of his—an Italian racing motorist in his Grand Prix racer. The next day he had a telephone call informing him that his Italian friend had been killed the day before on the Monza track, wearing, as usual, his white overall with the fur collar. It was then that the count suddenly remembered his friend's last words: "In any case, we shall meet again."

They Unite for Social Action

By G. L. BOLTON

For more than thirty years the National Council of Social Service has developed co-operation between voluntary and statutory social services

A HOME is found for an unmarried mother. There she can have her baby and be encouraged to prepare for the future. Her benefactors, in her hour of greatest need, are the members of a voluntary society. Similarly, an East End boy is at a loose end. His lack of purpose may drag him into juvenile crime and the degradation of the courts. So a voluntary youth leader introduces him to a boys' club and there he learns the give-and-take of citizenship. Then there is the new housing estate with few amenities, and tenants who feel an uncomfortable strangeness among alien surroundings and people. Voluntary action provides them with a community centre in which they can meet and run the kind of social activities that make life worth living.

Yet not so very long ago the wiseacres were saying that the welfare legislation which followed the war would lead to an inevitable decline in the strength of voluntary social organisations. Had this happened it would, indeed, have been a sad day for social progress, for the communal gain would only have been achieved at the expense of voluntary agencies' losses.

Voluntary societies attract the spare-time energies and enthusiasms of individual men and women. While the State and local authorities should administer essential social services, including some that they have not so far touched, it is on the voluntary organisations that a tremendous amount of social work depends. For in the majority of the tasks that the voluntary societies shoulder it would, in any event, be inappropriate for public authorities to interfere. The ideal state of affairs is willing co-operation between voluntary and statutory bodies on any matter in which there is a dual interest.

For more than thirty years the National Council of Social Service has existed to co-ordinate and promote the social services by developing co-operation among voluntary service agencies and between them and the statutory authorities. The National Council, itself a voluntary agency, is the central body to which a great number of national and provincial voluntary societies are affiliated and to which Government departments nominate their representatives. In the words of Dr. Keith Murray, a former chairman of the National Council, it is an organisation which exercises "a formative influence on social thought, policy, and action."

Organisations which send a member to the National Council include such well-known social service societies as the British Council for the Welfare of Spastics, the British Red Cross Society, Family Service Units, the National Association for Maternity and Child Welfare, and the National Old People's Welfare Committee. Youth organisations represented include the Boy Scouts Association, the Boys' Brigade, the National Association of Boys' Clubs, the Girls' Friendly Society and the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organisations. The International Friendship League, the East and West Friendship Council, and the International Voluntary Service for Peace add a spice of international brotherhood to the proceedings.

Open-air and country lovers' organisations like the Youth Hostels Association, the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Commons, Open Spaces, and Footpaths Preservation Society have their members on the National Council of Social Service. The Arts are represented by thriving movements like the British Drama League, the British Federation of Music Festivals, the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the Library Association, and the Museum Association.

The Churches play their part, too, on the National Council. So do the pro-

Two Lake District hikers consult their map; a spastic child smiles bravely; and a Citizens' Advice Bureau helper satisfies another inquirer. The National Council of Social Service created the Citizens' Advice Bureau service at the outbreak of war, and both the Youth Hostels Association and the British Council for the Welfare of Spastics are voluntarily affiliated to the National Council

fessional institutes and associations such as the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of Nursing, and the National Union of Teachers. To the National Council also go more than seventy representatives from local and area Councils of Social Service, Community Associations, Rural Community Councils, and Community Service Clubs. Representatives from the national associations of local authorities and interested Government departments, plus a limited number of outstanding individual members, complete the comprehensive pool of experience that is available at the National Council's meetings.

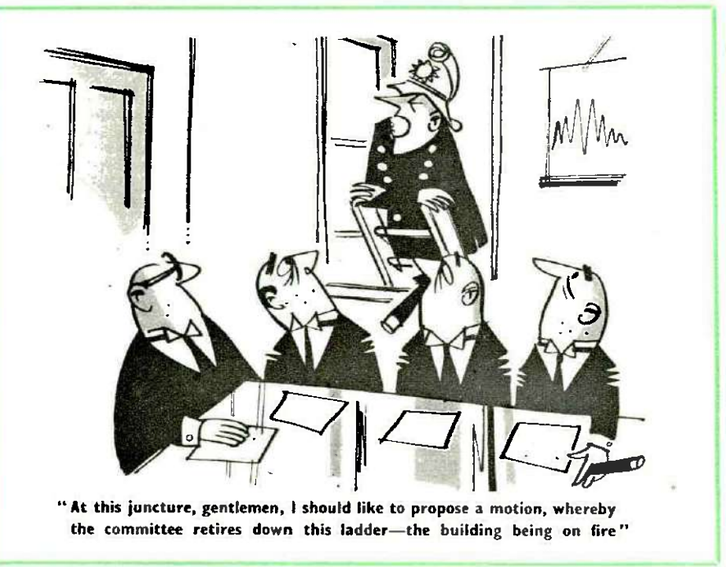
Few purposeful, social organisations are unrepresented on the National Council. The views of the National Council, therefore, on co-operation between voluntary organisations and statutory authorities are certainly the most well-informed and, perhaps, the most responsible that can be obtained in Britain. Taking up the point made by those who imagined that the voluntary societies would decline as the Welfare State increased its activities, a recent Annual Report of the National Council declared: "This has not happened and by the nature of the case, as we now see, is unlikely to happen so long as individual initiative is accepted in this country as an essential condition of social well-being. Their [the voluntary organisations'] role would nevertheless be much more restricted to-day were it not for the fact that the public authorities are prepared to take them seriously as important instruments of community life and not merely as useful agents to be dismissed as soon as it is convenient."

In the service of the community, the National Council of Social Service acts as a clearing house of information, carries out research, promotes social experiments, and encourages international co-operation in social work. The National Council actively supports the creation of local and area Councils of Social Service. These Councils provide a common meeting ground for those engaged in different branches of the social service. They also plan and carry out pioneer services for the benefit of the whole community. Self-help schemes among neighbours, an advisory service on homemaking, and welfare projects for coloured students and workers might figure in the local and area Councils' plans. Rural Community Councils promote the welfare of the country dweller and Community Associations bring together the residents of the suburbs.

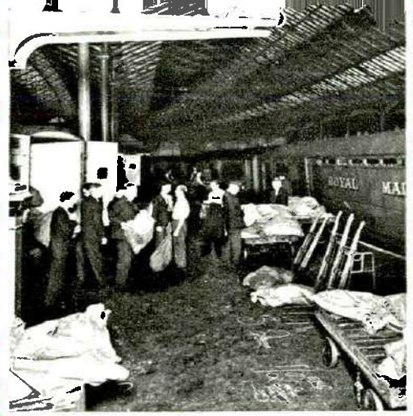
About 900 local Old People's Welfare Committees have now been established. They owe their existence, for the most part, to the National Council acting through the National Old People's Welfare Committee.

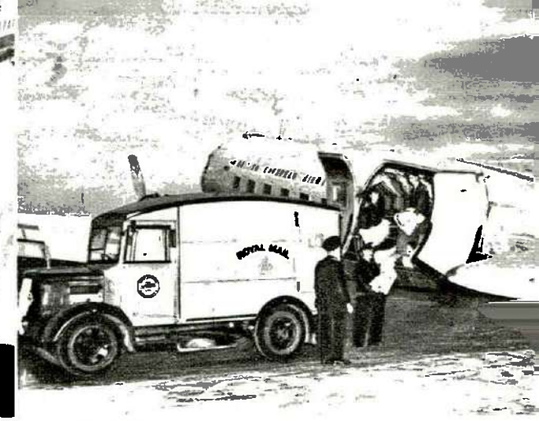
More than 500 Citizens' Advice Bureaux handle to-day about a million enquiries a year. It was the National Council which started this service.

The National Council is an all-embracing voluntary organisation. No society loses its independence by affiliation to it. As co-ordinator of the social services and as a pioneer in new fields the National Council of Social Service is performing a gargantuan role in the betterment of society. May its prestige and influence proceed from strength to strength!



"At this juncture, gentlemen, I should like to propose a motion, whereby the committee retires down this ladder—the building being on fire"

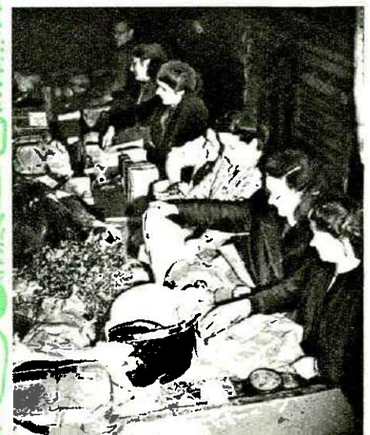




It's a busy time for the G.P.O

He must not be too early; if he clears the pillar-box before the stated time, an important letter might miss the post. But you can post as early as you like for Christmas - the earlier the better, stress the G.P.O.

Badly-packed parcels being repaired. Heartbreak Corner is aptly named, for every Christmas about 43,000 parcels have to be repacked; many cannot be delivered at all



BY land, sea, and air the mail goes out to all parts of the world. Working day and night at top speed, rarely making mistakes, the G.P.O. is taken very much for granted.

Only at Christmas is the spotlight focused on this vital public service. Then the postman is an eagerly-awaited figure, bringing cards, letters, and parcels at unaccustomed hours of the day—often from old acquaintances who only write at this one time of the year.

Yes, it's a busy time for the G.P.O. Not only for those who sort and deliver the mail, but for the other behind-the-scenes workers who deal with the 50,000,000 cards, letters, and parcels which are handled by the post office every day during the Christmas season.

Always a hive of industry at this time of the year, unfortunately, is Heartbreak Corner, where badly-packed parcels go to be patched up. All too often, though, the parcels have completely disintegrated, leaving no trace of a name or address. If only parcels contained a slip giving the name and address of the sender and intended recipient, plus a list of the contents, fewer people would be disappointed by the non-arrival of gifts, say the G.P.O., who keep all articles from undelivered parcels for a period to await a claim; then unclaimed articles are sold by auction.

Badly addressed letters are another constant headache to the post office. The postman will trace the address if he can; if not, the letter has to be opened and returned to the sender. Three million items every year—many of them Christmas cards—cannot be delivered to anybody because of incorrect addressing, and failure to include the the sender's address.

What happens to all those letters addressed, in childish handwriting, to Father Christmas, at places ranging from Denmark to Fairyland? They are usually regarded as "Dead Letters"; but sometimes a particularly pathetic one is found . . . then there's a collection among the kind-hearted post office workers and a child's faith in Santa Claus—perhaps a mother's faith in human nature—is revived and strengthened.

Letters and parcels go through one of the sorting operations. Previously they have been "channelised" into various districts; now they are sorted into towns. It helps the sorters if you include the name of the county in the address on your mail

He'd be glad of that famous sleigh and reindeer, but stout boots must suffice; the post must be delivered whatever the weather

Parcels being handled by the mechanical plough—but any marked "fragile" are taken out and receive individual attention

The end of the story; a postman delivers a Christmas parcel

The FORMAL GARDEN

by

W. E. Shewell-Cooper

M.B.E., N.D.H., F.L.S.

THIS year I have had the privilege of judging gardens in the big housing estates around London, and what an experience it was. It is really most encouraging to see the magnificent gardens produced by absolute amateurs: men who have read all they can and, although not experts, have planned their gardens to meet their needs and to suit their own particular tastes, each one full of originality and, unlike those designed by landscape architects to suit the requirements of others, each one personally tended and owned.

There are many who favour the formal pool—rectangular, round, or square—suitably placed at the end of the lawn, or perhaps quite near the house, surrounded with beds of bulbs. If the beds are circular, diagonal planting should be carried out. The easiest way to explain this type of planting is to say that it looks rather like the wedges that are seen when an orange is cut through transversely. If the garden beds are rectangular or square, the bulbs will, of course, be planted in lines parallel with the edges.

The secret of success with small beds is simplicity. Do not attempt to carry out complicated systems of planting. For the beginner, a blaze of one colour for each bed is much more effective and pleasing to the eye than a complicated pattern that just does not "come off." And remember, straight lines must be straight.

If the beds are near the house, double pleasure can be obtained from these small beds by planting bulbs of scented subjects, which produce a delightful fragrance through open windows as well as colour to satisfy the eye. Chionodoxas, hyacinths and certain narcissi are useful for this purpose.

Be sure, when planning your bedding scheme, to arrange for the size and height of the plants to be in scale with the size of your beds. If the beds are to be only 3 to 4 ft. square, the bulk of the plants should be no taller than about 8 to 9 in. If you are fortunate enough to have a very large garden, of course, you can indulge in taller plants.

I have often been asked what bedding schemes I have found successful, and with the proviso that it is always possible to plan better beds with thought and experience, I would suggest the following:

Firstly, if you are going to use carpeting plants, put these in first to ensure that you plant the bulbs in between them. If you like the blue Imperator irises, the viola Palmer's White makes a very good carpet. If a yellow iris is preferred, such as Yellow Queen, then try St. Brigid anemones as your carpeting plant. The pheasant's eye narcissus looks charming with a mixed bed of polyanthas, while the daffodil Marian Crann is really beautiful when carpeted with the aubretia Dr. Mules. If you are planning to plant hyacinths, try the red John Boss with the winter-flowering pansy Ice King as a carpet. If blue is desired, try King of the Blues with double white arabis.

Now for a few ideas that can be attempted with tulips. Try the scarlet tulip Farncombe Sanders with the white Zwanenburg for a really bright combination, planting these alternately with a carpet of Cambridge-blue forget-me-nots. The royal blue forget-me-not looks very well with Inglescombe Yellow tulips blooming above. One year I grew a bronzy purple tulip, Louis XIV, carpeted with the wallflower Fire King, and the show really was magnificent.

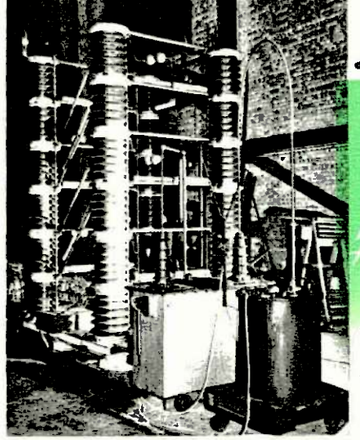
As I have said, these schemes are just suggestions and an equally grand show may, generally speaking, be obtained from the smaller and less expensive bulbs. Crocuses should be planted 3 in. apart and 2 in. deep, tulips 5 in. apart and 4 in. deep, hyacinths 6 in. apart and 5 in. deep, and narcissi and daffodils 8 in. apart and about the same depth. Irises should be planted about 3 in. deep and from 6 to 8 in. apart, depending on how brave a show you wish to make.

ROSES for SMOKY DISTRICTS

I HAVE been asked if it is possible to grow roses successfully in smoky districts. It is useless to try the teas and the pernetians in these areas, but I can recommend the following: Betty Uprichard (coppery-pink shaded salmon), Vesuvius (crimson), Dainty Bess, Billy Boy (canary yellow), Mrs. Henry Bowles (rose-pink), Christine (butter yellow), Margaret McGredy (scarlet orange), and Red Letter Day (rosy salmon). Any of the polyantha roses will do, especially Ellen Poulson, Karen Poulson and Kirsten Poulson.

It is worth paying extra to ensure the best start; bushes with good root system are required. The smoke-laden atmosphere causes soil acidity, so dressings of hydrated lime should be given in December at 4 to 5 oz. to the square yard. Roses in smoky districts are greatly troubled with mildew, but not subject in the usual way to black spot disease. The mildew can be helped if potash can be given every February; wood-ashes, at half a pound to the square yard, or sulphate of potash at 2 to 3 oz. to the square yard.

The bushes should not be planted too close to walls or high fences and dead leaves should not be allowed to accumulate around the base of the plants. Mulch the plants in May with well-rotted manure or composted vegetable refuse.



At the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington, Middlesex, this high-capacity impulse generator produces voltage surges simulating those due to lightning

[Photo by courtesy of C.O.I.

LIGHTNING in the Lab

by E. R. Yarham

NOT content with Nature's manifestations, British scientists are now producing lightning in the laboratory. The largest generator of its kind in Britain has been opened at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, Middlesex, to test the resistance of electrical equipment. It cost £30,000, and weighs 50 tons, and at a public testing 20 ft. flashes, representing a discharge of over three million volts, were produced across a row of insulators in the high voltage laboratory.

Similar "synthetic" lightning, up to five million volts in power, can be produced in the American General Electric Company's high voltage laboratory at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. It houses two powerful impulse generators with a peak voltage of 7½ million volts. They are used to test various types of apparatus by providing the conditions of an electrical storm.

In laboratories of this type the exact conditions of thunderstorms can be simulated by varying the temperature and humidity.

At Teddington high voltage equipment, generators, transformers, and cables will be tested before use in the country's grid. When testing porcelain insulators spectacular effects may be produced, with blinding arrows of flame shooting out 50 ft. and burying the insulators under test in a wave of fire.

Such artificial achievements sound impressive, but they cannot equal the real, for a flash of lightning is probably the greatest concentration of power in Nature. One flash measured by engineers was put at no less than 15 million volts. It is reckoned that the pressure that forces the power towards the earth would be sufficient to impel a 30 lb. shell at a speed of 1,500 miles an hour.

A flash observed in Illinois, America, opened up a fissure in the ground 40 ft. long and a foot wide. No bottom was found up to 150 ft. Another, this time in a southern English county, fused instantaneously and completely two thick wire nails on the top of a post. If done mechanically it would have called for the employment of 5,000 h.p. over a second of time. The flash did it in not more than 10 millionths of a second.

Perhaps the weirdest effects of lightning arise from smaller currents induced near the main discharge. For example, clothes may be ripped to shreds, steel objects twisted into shapeless forms, metals melted, and small trees split in two. A sudden expansion of enclosed pockets of air, due to terrific heat, is responsible for much of the damage. This, no doubt, accounted for the vanishing of every drop of ink in the inkwells in a classroom. Another time a respectable woman was at work in her kitchen, when a flash stripped her stark naked, yet left her practically uninjured, though, one imagines, considerably shaken. A third flash burnt the bedclothes of a bed, but left two boys unhurt. This particular flash ended in the larder, where it reduced a ham to a cinder.

Lightning is, of course, always being produced in some part of the world or other. Scientists estimate that there are about 6,000 flashes every second, and that of these perhaps 50 strike the earth.

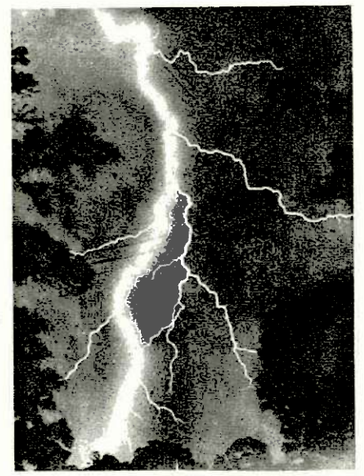
Professor Loeb, of the University of California, says that what happens is this: when a cloud has reached a certain potential, which is built up by raindrops carried up into the heart of a thunder cloud (this may be hundreds of millions to billions of volts), a cosmic ray particle ionises the air and initiates a "streamer"—a path of ions like a fine filament joining cloud to earth.

Along this path the potential wave or "return stroke" of the main lightning flash passes from earth to cloud. This stroke makes a channel, seldom more than an inch in width, but the air inside may be heated to as high as 30,000 degrees. Inevitably it expands explosively, giving rise to thunder.

A flash lasts an infinitesimal length of time, a 100 millionth or so of a second—it is the persistence of the image on the retina which makes it seem to last longer.

Thunderstorms are such important weather phenomena that they are systematically studied in most countries. In Britain the Thunderstorm Census Organisation is in its thirtieth year, and it has for its main object the collection of information relating to the place, date, and time of occurrence of thunder, lightning, and hail in all parts of the British Isles. The assembly of these reports provides information about the seasonal frequency for different districts.

Individual thunderstorms can be charted—the growth and dissipation of the storm, and the places where damage occurred. An annual summary is produced, and charts and reports have been prepared relating to outstanding occurrences. The information collected can be of value in determining insurance rates for a particular locality or object, and in electrical research.



For the JUNIORS

DEAR JUNIORS,—I expect, like me, you are all beginning to get excited about Christmas. There's not much time left now to plan for parties and presents; to put up the decorations of paper and holly and mistletoe. Are you giving a party this Christmas? If so, you might like to try out this jolly good way of deciding partners for the tea table and for games. Get all the girls to take off their left shoes, and place these in a pile at one end of the room. The boys stand at the other end, and on the word "Go" they have to run to the pile and each pick up one shoe. For the rest of the party, a boy partners the girl whose shoe he has chosen.

Well, juniors, I hope you'll all have a very merry Christmas, with lots of presents and parties.

Your friend, BILL.

PUZZLE CORNER

1. Groceries in Reverse

Hidden in the following sentences are six groceries (two in each sentence) which your mother might buy at the co-operative grocery store. You'll have to look carefully to find them because they're spelt **the wrong way round** (e.g. **eseehc** instead of **cheese**).

(a) There is no cabin near the major road.
(b) At last the boys said they would rag us.
(c) Some Indians have bigger tomahawks than others.

2. County, Town, and Industry

Select one letter from each of the eight three-letter groups below to give you the name of an English county. Another letter from each of the remaining groups will give you the name of a town in that county. The letters left over give you the name of an industry you might once have found around the town.

CNS AAH LEN TST MWH
III RNC HEE

3. Strange Object

It may be made of wood, iron, or stone. It may be long or short, straight or bent. It goes up, it goes down, but never moves. It is very strong but cannot stand by itself. What is it?

4. Catch Question

Write down 13 odd numbers which, when added up, will give you 142.

Solutions on page 8.

GAMES FOR YOUR PARTY

1. Parcel Passing

Your guests stand in one long row and number off from left to right. The odd numbers then about turn and they form one team, the even numbers forming the other. Give the first player of each team a fairly large parcel, and the game is to pass the parcel to the last one in the team as quickly as possible. But since the parcels must be passed *behind* the players, it's not quite so simple as it sounds.

2. Alphabet

All you need is 24 pieces of card, on one side of each of which is written a different letter of the alphabet (omit Q and X). The papers are placed on the table in any order with the letter sides downward. The first player then names a class of objects (towns, animals, birds, etc.) and turns over a letter. The next player has to name a town, animal, or bird as the case may be, beginning with that letter. He has 15 seconds to do this in and if he succeeds he keeps the letter, names a different class of object, and turns over another letter for the next player. If he fails he is passed over in favour of the next player. The game goes on until all the letters have been used. The player with most letters at the end is the winner.

October Competition Winners:

SANDRA COOPER
120 Ladyfield Road, Chippenham, Wilts.

JACQUELINE M. KNIGHT
Woodlands, 34 Balcombe Gardens, Horley, Surrey.

THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

TWO GRAND PRIZES

This month our two prizes will be awarded for the best drawings of a Christmas scene. There will again be two classes one for the under-nines and another for competitors aged nine or over. So get out your paints or crayons and forward your entry as soon as you can.

Make sure you keep to the following rules:

1. Your drawing must not measure more than 10 in. by 8 in. and it must be entirely your own work.
2. You must write on the back of your drawing your full name, address, and age.
3. Post to: The Editor, "Co-operative HOME Magazine," P.O. Box 53, 1, Balloon Street, Manchester, 4. (Put 2½d. stamp on your envelope.)

LITTLE OLIVER — By L. R. BRIGHTWELL

"The ladder's our only hope. And what are these things on the walls? Martian household pets?"

"He seems matey anyway. Better follow. Can't do anything else."

"Hurrah! Eats at last! This must be the Martian Christmas pud . . . Supposing they *have* Christmas here."

There's no turning back now and Jane thinks she has a cold coming. Very unfortunate. "Having a cold" simply *isn't done* on Mars!

Time is getting short— only a few days left !

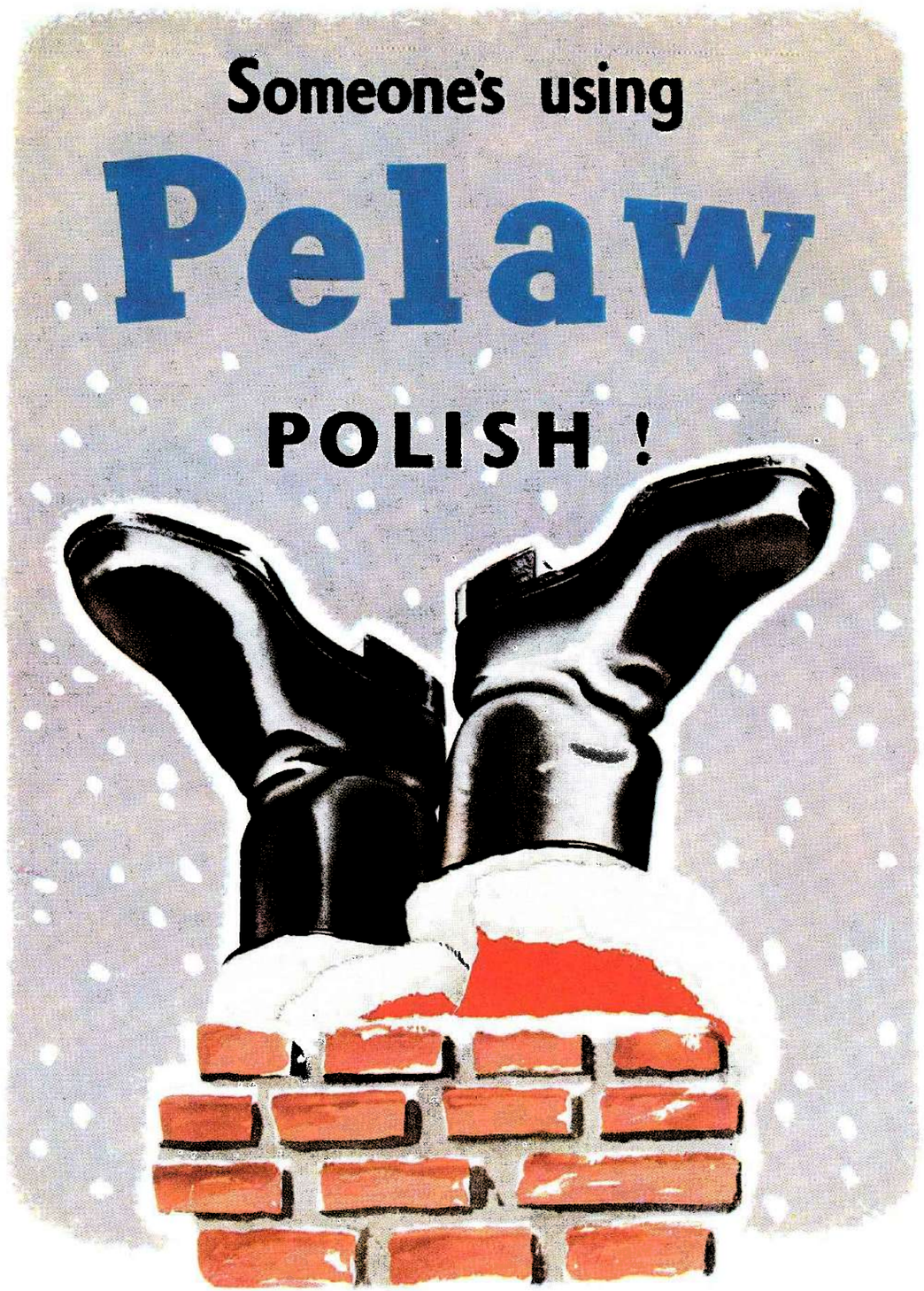
WE STILL CAN OFFER A WIDE VARIETY OF ACCEPTABLE GIFTS AT MODERATE PRICES

LET US HELP YOU TO CHOOSE !

You will find charming Gifts for Ladies— Practical Gifts for Men, Gifts for the home, and delightful Gifts for the Children.

FOR SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOPPING HOURS SEE OUR WINDOWS

There's still time to choose something exciting from the CO-OP.



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A wealth of health in your home with these four smart guards—C.W.S soldiers-of-good-fortune! See that every room has complete protection—put NEWSHEAF, WHITE WINDSOR, CONGRESS, and MICROL on sentry-go against grime. Enlist these soaps now— and make it a standing order!

NEWSHEAF *contains palm and olive oils for a fine lather without rubbing. Use it for all household washing — it keeps your hands wonderfully smooth.* **5½d** Per tablet

CONGRESS *the pale general purpose washing soap. Lathers well and lasts a surprisingly long time.* **5½d** Per tablet

MICROL *the carbolic soap with the antiseptic action. Keeps your home fresh and germ-free.* **5½d** Per tablet

WHITE WINDSOR *the highest grade of household soap manufactured. Contains the same first-rate materials used to make toilet soaps* **6d** Per tablet

C·W·S

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