

Campden, July 1945. T.O.C.H. Newsletter No. 70.

With some pride we remind readers that we have reached No. 70 of our little publication! We hope we are not showing too many signs of a white woolly old age; that our efforts to keep touch with you all are still welcomed - and that the absence of any correspondence from you this month is not to be taken as any sign to the contrary! 70 months may be a very short time in the long ages of Campden's existence - but it is almost certainly the longest period in its whole course of which a consecutive account of its doings has been recorded and published and sent to the four quarters of the earth. So we will console ourselves with the reflection that we have made history!!

The war atmosphere here has undergone a subtle change since V.E. Day. The tension of the five years has inevitably relaxed somewhat, as the war has receded from our doorstep; but the knowledge that it is in full swing away in the East keeps us sober minded as we realize that the travail is not yet over. Most of our younger men & women are still conspicuous by their absence, owing to the necessary delay in demobilization on the one hand and on the other to the many who are out East still in the fighting line. So like the rest of Britain, we in Campden are still waiting for the full return of peace conditions.

But we still make the most of small signs that things are moving. Many controls are still on - but the Blackrat is gone! the Siren is dismantled and the only reminder of the old fearsome noise is the sound of the Station Bus starting up! The return of the Basic Petrol Ration (4 gallons a month) has put a few more cars on our streets. Coaches can again be hired for outings. Double Summer Time goes on July 15th.

The General Election, though doubtfully welcomed by many, is at any rate a sign of the return to ordinary life. You will be interested to hear the results of the Campden Election (and so shall we). We hear that well over two-thirds of the electorate here went to the poll for the 3 cornered contest and polling day brought quite a little excitement to our quiet streets. Otherwise the ordinary things of our town life go on their wonted way. We go for our daily rations (bringing back a proportion of corned beef on our meat ration now). The weather in its good old English way is varied by "rain with occasional sunshine". The Open Air Baths are popular on the warm days.

The Campden Nursing Association has issued its Annual Report showing a fine year of work - Miss Wood, the District Nurse, has made in all 3329 visits. The following Officers of the Association were elected at the Annual Meeting on May 24th - President; The Countess of Gainsborough; Vice Presidents: Lady Clare King, Mrs Naumann, Mrs Devas; Chairman: Mrs Bonnet Clark; Treasurer: Mrs Poole; Sec: Mrs Hirst; Representative on Childs Welfare Assn: Mrs O'Loughlin.

The Joke Bag (3 from Punch):-

(1) The language of the sailor today is much milder than it used to be, says a Naval Padre. A parrot being brought home on leave was heard to apologise when a soldier accidentally knocked its cage off the baggage rack! (2) During a Rugby match in a fog the ball was lost. The players were informed of this at the end of the game. (3) Bruin, a 4 year old grizzly in the Zoo refused to enter a new cage and was finally pushed in by the keepers. Pressure was brought to bear! (4) (from the Match Box) Judge (to old offender) "Have you anything to say?" "Only this, my Lord; it comforts me to know that one wise man on the Bench can undo much of the mischief wrought by twelve idiots in the jury box." The minimum sentence was passed by his lordship!

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Epilogue:- Is life worth living? That depends on how much we are prepared to put into it, not on how much we desire to get from it.

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Cheerio.

Pity the poor editor, eager to announce the news of the end of the War, but still waiting like the rest of the world the final excuse of Japan. As we write, that answer has not actually come and so we all wait with breathless interest and with what patience we can muster. Impetuous hands have already deflagged Campden, but the Newsletter, true to its traditions must wait on events. If this letter is "out of date" as regards the War when it reaches you, the record of Campden events, to which we now turn, will doubtless still be of interest.

Campden Tee H Group is taking time by the forelock in preparing & issuing a letter of welcome to any returning to civilian life, with an invitation to come to the Tee H. weekly meeting on Thursdays. "Do come and meet us" it says "so that you can offer your friendship and accept our fellowship in return". The same welcome awaits you.

Among those already demobilized and home again are F.W. Bonfield, M. Groves, Col. Haymanes, J. Hedges, T. Morrigan, Major Naumann. You will be interested to hear that quite a few men have been home on leave and during the past month we have seen Fred Brotheridge, W. Capors, Bert Charles, J. Cherry, P. Cutts, C. McGrath, J. McGrath, F. Greve, H. Hart, E. (Bantam) James, A. Keen, Ron Nebes, Phoebe Smith, Jayce Smith, W. Smith.

The Campden Forces Welfare Asscn has just issued its most interesting Annual Report and tells among other things of "the despatch of the weekly newspapers to all men and women serving overseas, and to those serving in the Far East parcels of Toilet requisites, books, cigarettes, pipes and tobacco at intervals. P.O.W. in Germany were sent cigarettes until the Battle of Germany commenced. The P.O.W. in Japanese hands, we regret to say we have been unable to do anything for, owing to the attitude of the Japanese Government.

Obituaries. We much regret to report the death of Sub/Lt (A) Roy Keeley RNVR, who was killed in an accident whilst taking off the Aircraft Carrier in which he was serving. His elder brother was killed earlier in the War. We offer our deepest sympathy to Commodore L. Keeley and Mrs Helena Keeley in their great bereavement.

We also report with deep regret the death of Mr Chas. Miller of The Bungalow, Wold Lane, who passed away after a long illness on Aug. 6. Our sincerest sympathy is offered to Mrs Miller & family.

B.E.M. Cordial congratulations to Staff Sgt F.T. Callaway (RASC) who has been awarded the B.E.M. (Mil. Div) for gallant and distinguished services in Italy.

Our vernacular story from J.W. :- "Elle bwoys! T'other Sunday in Church, young what's is name whispers t'is mother 'I dont all feel bad mum'. 'Do ya, er sez, woll slip out an goo hemo when they be singin the nox hymn'. E slipped out but soon come back. 'Why didn ya goo omó?' er sez. 'Oo' sez ee, 'thor wuz a box by the door labelled Fur the sick! So leng etc".

Correspondence Cpl A.A. Drinkwater (1015367. RAF. Wyton, Hunts) tells that he has received every one of the 70 N/letters, has enjoyed every one and still looks forward to it every month. "All we look forward to is our Demob., to be all together again with our mates.... I had a trip last week in a Lancaster over S Germany and believe me, it is a nice mess - all we can see in most places is two walls standing. Spr G.E. Margotts (14550692. 234 Port Cons. & Rep. Coy. RE. BLA) expresses very grateful appreciation of the N/letter which has arrived regularly throughout the whole of this campaign. "I speak for myself and I am sure for many others, that it is the only link of its type, for it supplies information of Campdenians which very rarely appears in personal letters or local newspapers". His impression of Campden when last on leave was that it was "a haven of peace and solitude, unchanged by time or tide." He gives a very interesting account of his travels in Germany and his work (surveying). "Finally, may I say how pleasant it was to read John Tucker's letter - it brought back many memories."

Col. James Hargroaves (Cotswold House) writes of his conviction that the N/letter "creates a grand spirit of comradeship, which I fervently hope may never be allowed to diminish, and help in facing a difficult future which will call forth all our combined efforts."

Epilogue:- "No victory is an end, but a beginning; not a final event but an introduction to a fresh task for which it has opened the way."

Dear Campdenians,

The great Dr Johnson once said "When speculation has done its worst, two and two still make four!" which is worth remembering, for whatever problems the mysteries of life may present, there are simple, fundamental facts which never alter and cannot be doubted. Stick to the things we know and have learned are true, about God and man, and life becomes steady and confident.

By the way, quite by the way - if two and two make four, then six twelves make seventy-two; and the number of this Newsletter reminds me that we have completed exactly six years of our correspondence with you while you have been away from Campden. They have been six years of travail and stress in which we have all in varying degrees borne our part and during which some have made the ultimate sacrifice. And now the war is over, bringing with it a deep sense of relief and thanks to God who brought us through to victory and brought to overthrow the foes of freedom.

The details brought to light in this morning's papers, of the unspeakable horrors perpetrated by the Japanese on our prisoners (following on the earlier revelations of the German brutalities in concentration and P.O.W. camps) make terrible reading and it is hard to restrain our feelings. They may serve to remind us of the depth of the iniquity against which we fought and the measure of the deliverance that has come to the world from such beastliness.

To change the subject, as you have seen, the sudden announcement of V.J. Day caught the Editorial Board napping and before our August Letter was actually despatched, the end of the six years' war had come. But Campden recovered in time to celebrate the days in a unmistakable fashion. Services in the Churches were held on the first day, to offer the firstfruits of our gratitude to Almighty God. On the second day, a fine programme of events, arranged at the shortest notice, took place on the Square where a big crowd assembled throughout the afternoon. Drills, displays, fancy dress competitions, bands, races, conjuring, a play by the Osiris Players etc engaged our attention. The children enjoyed a scrumptious tea in the Town Hall. Rain interfered with open air doings in the evening which finished with a dance in the Town Hall. So Campden celebrated!

Correspondence is this month conspicuous by its absence! But home visits from the Forces have been noted in Campden as follows: Ted Bennett, Ina Charles, L.Harris, D.Hughes, G.Keitley, D.Lane, E.Lockyer, Harold Payne, W.C.Payne, W.Plested, G.Stowe, A.Wadley, and G.Wright.

A Campden story (which cannot be authenticated) is going around that the Women's Institute is now occupying the room at back of the Eight Bells and that many more husbands are pressing their wives to join and have promised to fetch them home from their meetings! Another story (still less believable) is offered by our Gloucestershire vernacular correspondent as follows:- "Now, yers' another yarn fur tha. One of our land girls yer - we'll call er X - no, lets have a change, call this un V - wuz sent t'milk th'cows first mornin. Er wuz found usin th'cows tail as a pumpandle. Er wuz'nt gettin results! Another time er dodged back quick when er found a catterpillar in sum lettuce er wuz a'washin. But dont you goo exin one if it wuz er - er er ull tell tha off! I knows - I tried it! So long- see tha etc."

Other Humours (1) The Japanese secret agent was instructed to report on internal conditions, particularly on national morale in the United States. He sent his report to Tokyo "Conditions very bad; people all very hungry; when two meet on street, one always says to other 'What's cookin'?" (2) Hunter (to old guide):- "Have you ever been lost in the woods?" Old guide:"No I never did get lost but I was bewildered once for four days." (3) Customer:"I'd like to get a hat." Store-keeper (rather deaf):"Hey?" Customer:"No, straw."

Epilogue

- (1) "No man must go to heaven who has not sent his heart thither before." (Ehp Wilson)
- (2) "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years how men would believe and adore." (Emerson)

This issue commences a post-war series of your newsletter as the September number closed the war series. At the same time your present editor takes the place of the Rev. O.P.J. Smith. To follow Mr Smith, in the editorial chair, with his record of 70 monthly letters, is indeed a difficult job. He had the happy knack of conveying to the fighting forces the many details of Campden life they longed for and I am sure all our readers would like to place on record our gratitude to him for his devotion and a task splendidly accomplished.

As a final savings drive "Thanksgiving Week" was opened, in bright sunshine, on Saturday Oct. 6th by the Rt Hon. W.S. Morrison, M.P.; a good crowd was present and this last special effort got a good send off. Musical honours were provided by the Campden Town Band, which, by the way, goes from strength to strength as it enlists new recruits and welcomes back old members. The Target is £33333 and doubtless our town will make even this great sum look small. Money raising is not the sole occupation of this week; a Thanksgiving Service at the Parish Church was well attended but many missed the usual parade; whist drives and dances, football matches and all kinds of gaiety have been arranged and a very full week will close with a sports meeting on the Grammar School ground. Mr Winward and his committee are to be congratulated on an effort that should bring savings to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and much pleasure to Campden.

The various churches had their harvest festivals and the display of fruit and vegetables tell of a bumper crop in spite of a wet summer.

After a long period of silence the wedding bells have started again and we record the marriage of Miss Olive Oakley and Sergt Godkin; Mr Sandison and Mrs Cleak; Miss Logan and Lord St Vincent; Major Hargreaves and Miss Nightingale.

Monday Sept. 23rd brought us great news; we heard that the last of our prisoners of war was safe and sound, that Desmond Pymont was well and in Australian hands. This followed on news that Wilfrid Ward, a prisoner in Singapore and David Pratt, a prisoner in Bangkok had been released; the result is that Mr & Mrs Pymont, Mr & Mrs Pratt and Mrs & Michael Ward are all in the attic above the seventh heaven with joy. And now we congratulate the relatives of our once long list of prisoners of war on the safety of their loved ones, on the triumph of their patience which sustained them through dark days to victory.

The following have been on leave lately:- Daphne Haydon, D. Winward, G. Haydon, P. Cutts, R. Walters, M. Bricknell, R. Phillips, Sandy Charles. These are now aback in civvy street:- Bert Charles, J. McGrath, C. McGrath, W. Smith, C. Nicholls, P. Haydon, A. Haydon, C. Stevenson, R. Farr, M. Groves. If there are any others demobilised, will they please let us know so that the news can be included in the letters?

"Ello bwoys. I a'bin reminded by th'land girl I wrote about las wik (you knew, the one I called V; praps EV ud be better) as I furgot t'tell about er fust job a'collectin th'eggs. When er got in uv um, th'missis sez 'Wusnt ther no duck eggs?' 'No' er sez 'thers only sun green uns left, an I thought I'd ought t'leave em t'ripen.'" "Ther a'bin a let o' fireworks lot off this wik, proper barridge on um; but Tom Jin ks a'get a 'Fireworks sold out' notice on his door new, so Guy Fawkes looks like bein quiet like. So lang etc."

Wit of the month:- (1) I didnt know you suffered from rheumatism". "Sure, what else can I do with it?" (2) A husband is one who stands by you in troubles you wouldnt have had if you hadnt married him. (3) Fashion is gentility running away from vulgarity, afraid of being overtaken. (4) "What do you mean by bringing my daughter home at this unearthly hour?" demanded the irate father. "Well, I've got to be at work at seven" he replied.

And here's your epilogue:- Keep right on to the end of the road, but if it means being demobbed may it be a short one.

CONTRIBUTION TO TOC.H. NEWSLETTER No.73.  
OCTOBER 1945

The following have been on leave lately:-Daphne Haydon;  
D.Winward;P.Cutts;R.Walters;M.Bricknell & R.Phillips.

The following are now back in civvy street:-Bert Charles;  
J.McGrale;C.McGrale;W.Smith;C.Nicholls;P.Haydon;A.Haydon;  
C.Stevenson;R.Farr.

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Items to mention:- Savings week programme.  
Des.Pymnts release.  
O.P.J.S's editorship.  
Ch.Rms.spring clean.  
Football;if any.  
Harvest thanksgivings,assorted.

"Ello, Bwoys." Hey, but its a "wearyworld"! This yer Editor o'ourn is a terror! I a'ardly ad time t'furet last months effort, when e'sez 'I wants summut now fur th'Christmas letter! So yer I be, a'tryin t'think o'summut to write. Ah, well; yer goes! Christmas-- memories of past years will make you all long for home and friends, parties, plum puddings, mince pies, roast meats, crackers, nuts, drinks. Then Letters and Cards, but you will send and receive more of those than if you were at home. Then the Band and the Church Bells, and of course the Carol Singers. Not so long ago you were of that "Group Number" too! Well, for most of you, this is the last winter in the Services; next year you will be veterans, telling "When I was in the ---" and "When we were in ---" just as your fathers do about last time. Here are a few brevities for you:-

"One of the penalties of this centurys whim for small families is a serious shortage of kiñd aunts. "

"About the time you are important enough to take two hours for lunch, the doctor limits you to one glass of milk only."

"It is much easier to fight for our principles than to live up to them"

News Items:- Desmond Pymment is now home from Jap. P.O.W. Camp.

F/Sgt J.C. Jones, who used to live in Sheep Street, has died of wounds, our sympathy goes to his wife and two small daughters.

On leave lately:- Capt. J. Meadows; D. Pymment. F. Brotheridge. ? ? ? others

Dempbbbed recently:- W. Booker. W.W. Plested., A. Wadley. ? ? ? others