

7 years - monthly issues

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CAMPDEN. Oct. 1939.

It is felt by members of Toc H that Campden men serving abroad or in other parts of England would like to hear about commonplace happenings in their home town. We are therefore making an attempt to send, each month, a record of items of interest gleaned from as many sources as possible in the neighbourhood. Naturally we will not pass on information as to the whereabouts of men serving, or in fact anything connected with the conduct of the war, but rather the kind of things a man would tell a fellow working on the same job. For instance we have had to cater for quite an influx of children, while Berrington lives up to its reputation for the natural increase of the population. London has sent us 150 children of school age, two private schools have taken up residence, one at Burnt Norton and another at the Golden Cockerel.

Although the influx of children has made a great demand for classroom accommodation, the building of the new senior school has been suspended for the time being. While the whist-drive on Monday evenings and the dance on Saturdays at the Church Room and the P.M.E. at the Baptist Schoolroom are in full swing, outdoor games (apart from the school children) have been abandoned. Wally Stanley no longer brings noise to the recreation ground, for there is no football and he is left to score goals with a stroke of the pen.

Whenever two or more are gathered together in Campden in these days, talk, when not of the war, soon veers round to the subject of the Evacuees; many households now have them and housewives compare notes:- "One of mine simply WONT get up in a morning." "I know, and I can't get mine in at teatime." "Mine would be all right but they 'poke into' everything; one even upset the powder in my bedroom all over the floor. I had to clear it up. I was cross with her."

Anecdotes are plentiful, if not always unadorned:-
One boy goes excitedly to his teacher-"Teacher, I sor a rebbet wiv 'is skin on!"

One small girl, taken to help dig 'taters for dinner, asks, when picking them up "Did you bury them cos you was afride of airraids?"
One Campden girl, asked by an evacuee schoolmaster if we had an early closing day here, replied "No, we dont have no early closing day, they be open every day yer, but they shuts Thursday arternuns"
One London lassie, age 12, seems to keep some sort of a diary and makes her notes in verse. Here is a sample that tells its own story:-

1. One day from school we wandered slow,
With gleeful joy, our hearts aglow,
We saw an orchard near a field,
Where grew some trees which fruit did yield.
2. Eating apples and marching along
We felt like breaking into song.
We turned a corner, each one a cadger
And ran right into Farmer Badger!
3. "Stealing my apples" the farmer cried;
"O no sir, no sir" we all lied.
"O yes! a policeman we will need"
"You'll get in trouble through your greed".

Twas good that farmer's not a 'peacher'
Otherwise he'd tell our teacher!

P.S. Will you please advise any change of address to

Mr Mare, Hoocote, CAMPDEN, GLOS.

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Well, boys, there's a war on it seems! That's why you are away from home, thereby causing this monthly newsletter to be written. Finding something to write about causes me to sit down and think; who would expect such a great result from such a small cause!

I will tell of recent happenings - some may be true! I must tell you the latest chestnut and hope at least one of you has not heard it yet:- The Captain of a Destroyer recently stopped his ship. The First Officer asked why. The Captain said "We have located a submarine". The Officer then asked "Shall I get busy with the depth charges, Sir?". The Captain replied "Certainly not. I am sending a diver down with Leaflets". Chestnut? Sorry if it is but really when you come to think of it, it is a hard war for the U-boat men, nobody loves them and sends them leaflets.

Now to be serious. Our "Specials" take life and duty very seriously; their motto is "Ours not to reason why, ours but to do or die". Did you hear of the one who got awful muddy lying on the ground looking through underfloor ventilators to see if any light got through the floors? Or of the two who arranged to meet at the Station at 7 p.m. so as to walk their beat together? They met the NEXT day! One had waited at the Police Station and the other at the G.W.R. No names and no pack drill. Or of the officious special constable who stopped a car with too much light? It proved to be an official of the R.D.C. on urgent business. That car then radiated heat as well as light!

Have you heard of Harry's adventure? He rode that tall bike of his, the "Camel", into the back entrance of a pub; (the "Crimson Dog" we had better call it, back entrance in Ship Strit) and he rode between two stationary Army Lorries that chanced to be there. A sentry greeted him with fixed bayonet and a stern but unofficial challenge "W heer art t'gawn?" Harry jammed on both brakes, nose dived, looped the loop half way, lay on the ground, looked up and replied "I beyunt". Such is Campden in war time!

"A PROPER GANDA".

At Campden the electrical workers
Their work decided to quit,
So sorry they felt for poor 'itler
Lest with leaflets he may get hit.

A councillor who felt patriotic
Said such news quite gave us away,
He wrote in great haste to the papers
So we had two great laughs in one day.

37 of the N.Cotswold Hounds, been sent to America. They were so upset by the sea voyage that they would not eat all the pheasants sent with them, as 670 were landed at the same time. Then they had a further misfortune as the Yankees referred to them as dogs!

An evacuee was seen going down the High Street with a big marrow under his arm. When asked by P.C. --- where he got it he replied "Oh from a field. There are a lot more there and I'll tell you where it is if you want one!"

A boy in one of the villages was taking a lantern containing a lighted candle to light his mother home. He was told by a "Special" that he had too much light. "Ah, you are not up to date, I'm entitled to one candle power".

Cheerio.

P.S. Please advise any change of address to

Mr Mare, Hooocote, Campden, Glos.

For nearly three months you Campden boys have been from home; for some, long weary months, hearts aching for Home and all it implies; for others, months of change & adventure, of an introduction to a larger & wider world than ours of Campden.

Campden, - does the name bring visions & memories to you? Well I remember how, in the first instalment of this war, now over 20 years past, longed desperately for a few days leave, a few quite days in Campden.

Then the leave when it arrived, and Campden when I arrived; the smallness of it, the loveliness of it, and the clean sweet air of it, how nice to get out of the train and take deep breaths of the Cotswold air.

Then the walk home, can you too visualize it? Whaddon Bank, you notice that the trees are certainly rather larger than when last you noticed them; then you get your first glimpse of the ~~Tower~~ Church Tower; today you will soon pass the greenhouses, pushing themselves forward to the road, intruding, nothing Campdenlike about them, you feel.

Then you pass Berrington Road, unless you happen to live there, in which case you are soon greeting your families, but, after a meal, you, like those who live in the town, soon travel on to see Campden. Campden is "Home" & you feel you have not arrived until you have been into the town.

Nothing is changed; "Thank goodness" you say; and you experience a surge of feeling that you cannot explain as you turn the corner by the Church and see the New Pool, the Almshouses with their wall in front, the turf and the stones over which, but few years ago, you were playing leapfrog.

How friendly, how homelike and how small it looks; places seem to get larger in ones memories and it always surprises to find them shrunken on returning.

And so you continue your homeward way through the town, seeing places you had not noticed for many years, each with vague memories attached to it, forgotten long since; but with eyes opened by absence, each place gives a welcome to the Campdenian returning, and he realizes as never before that it the best place in the world.

It is a comforting thought for you, that, after this little job is over safely, Campden will welcome you back, and in very few days you will again be part of it, for it is the town and its people that combine to make Campden.

A Happy Christmas to you, one and all.

J. J. W.

Campden,
GLOS.
13.12.1939.

Campden Toc H Newsletter No. 3.

It is to be hoped that this issue of the Toc. H letter will reach you in time to bring our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. At the moment all kinds of preparation are being made in ways peculiar to Campden. The School Concert will again be one of the features of Christmas week, and the Nativity play is to be given at the Church Room on Christmas Eve. In spite of the War the usual Christmas visitors continue to arrive to share the quiet of the Hills, the glory of the Church and the safety that you have made sure.

Our Special Constables are still causing some fun. Who was the man who was so struck by the white line from the gate to the door of a house where he had to complain about the lights, that after an angry interview he started to roll up the white line to put inside his house up to his own bedroom? Or what about the 'Special' who, on going home from duty kicked something metallic? His torch brought to light a latchkey which, through the pouring rain he took to the Police Station and then went home with quite a Boy Scouts glow of pride. On searching for his own latchkey he found a hole in his pocket!! Have you heard of one of your comrades on whom a certain report was made thus:- Private X.Y.Z. Test Joint. Result-very creditable piece of work. Imagine his surprise two days afterwards to receive instructions to attend for duty at the officers' mess as cook! Poor Billy! Another evacuee story. One youngster who was being initiated into the mysteries of a shower bath by his master called out at the last moment "Do I have to take my trousers off?"

You may have groushings about your pay but see what happened in 1794. Here is an extract from a letter by "Sargant Samuell Wikings" (as he signs himself) of Tewkesbury. "I have Med Bold to Right this few lings Con Surning My Pay hi have ad nancer from London and they Say that Captin Hawkings as Drawd My Pay ever sens have Ben out and hi have sent a leter to him to Birmingham and Recev no ancer from im and hi that proper of sending to you By the Diser of the Mayor to know What I am to do I shold Be very Glad to have a nancer Back as son as Posable."

Here is a true naval story. A captured German sailor on board one of our warships went up to a sailor who was looking over the side and said "I dont think nothings of your ships and I dont think nothings of your sailors and I dont think nothings of your Winston Churchill," and spat into the sea. The sailor replied that he didn't care what the German thought about our ships or our sailors or our Winston but he'd better not spit into our sea again.

Well, for nearly three months you Campden boys have been from home; for some of you, long weary months with hearts aching for Home and all it implies; for others, months of change and adventure, of an introduction to a larger and wider world than ours of Campden. Campden! Does the name bring visions and memories to you? Well I remember how, in the last war which seems to me the prelude to the present one, I longed desperately for a few days leave, a few quiet days in Campden. Eventually leave was granted and I arrived at Campden. Campden- the smallness of it, the loveliness of it, and the clean sweet air of it; how nice it was to get out of the train and take deep breaths of the Cotswold air..Then the walk home, can you visualise it? Round Whaddon you notice that the trees are certainly larger than when last you saw them; then the first glimpse of the Church Tower standing sentinel over all those things we hold dear; then Berrington and so on to the Town. How friendly, how homelike and how small it looks; places seem to get larger in one's memory and it always surprises to find them shrunken on returning. (Do they or not?) And so homeward through the town, seeing places unnoticed before and reviving memories and realising anew that Campden is the best place in the world. May it ever be so.

Please read into and behind these very inadequate words of ours those thoughts which specially suit your particular circumstances, whatever they are and wherever you may be.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU.

(Kindly notify Mr J.Mare, 'Hooocote', Campden, Glos, of any change of Address.)

We are hoping that 1940 will be for us all a year of reunion, a year when we will get back to the country-town life we know so well and which means so much to us. We at home are keeping our hand in at the card table and the younger amongst us do not hesitate to move 'on a light fantastic toe' at frequent dances; these - the whist drives and dances - successfully help to overcome the monotony of the 'black-out' and also provide the funds to send some comforts to you fellows who are serving away from home.

The old Toc H dug-out at the Vicarage is opened daily as a Soldiers' Club and we are glad to feel that our efforts are appreciated and provide enjoyment for men who pass our way.

The town did its best to keep Christmas. The Nativity Play "The Way to Bethlehem" was again given at the Church Room on Christmas Eve; this year it was greatly helped by scenery painted by Capt. FitzHugh. The mummers did their stuff for one night and the Parish Church bells rang on Christmas morning; indeed we just did our best to keep the festival as in years gone by; but the carol singers were silent this time - they are keeping their voices for the end of the war and your home coming. God grant that it will be this year 1940.

1940! Always at the beginning of a new year there is at least a little looking backwards and looking forwards. In these few lines let us just glance each way. Backwards we see the constant upsets, as one country after another was attacked by the bullies of Europe; later we too became involved and although we are at war it is a relief to all not to be wondering what will happen next. Looking forward we see a probability of a year of fighting, followed, as some of the troops in France say, by two years rolling up the barbed wire! Looking back again, to events in Campden this time, we realise that some of our old friends will not be here to greet you when you return. John Keen we shall miss, and Joe Turner and already in the new year we have lost Jim Keely and George Dyde. Marriages have been quite popular, some of the more recent being those of George Hart, Lionel Ellis, Baldwin and last but not least Harry Marr. You will all join in wishing them happiness. Then about births--- but no, no, definitely not births for if one, even the smallest one got left out you would lose at least one contributor to these letters, when mother noticed the omission.

Our 'Specials' are now being taken seriously and have provided us with only one joke this month. It happened nearly opposite the 'Kettle', two Specials were seen with their faces and their torches pressed against a cottage window, apparently trying to see if there was a light that needed blacking out!!!

At the school childrens' entertainment which was a great success with its Squire's Party one unrehearsed effect caused much amusement -- one little girl at the end of each verse had to pull up her stocking and she did not know what the audience was laughing at.

Billy Payne has been neglecting his military duties to help the B.B.C. in a broadcast on the 6th Jan. He told us what a wonderful village Ebrington is.

Some of our visitors have been discovering 'things' in Campden. The old Gloucester Volunteers' uniforms, cooking and eating utensils have been brought to light. The uniforms ought to be sent to S.Africa for the Zulus- they would fetch a good price now.

Also in investigating their billets a couple of Yorkshiremen came across half a dozen bottles covered with cobwebs in a cellar. They removed one cork but the smell was not attractive; they prefer Yorkshire pudding to a 'drop of mothers'. Will they be able to discover where the old glass from the east window of the Church is?

The Germans are understood to be building ships with Zip fasteners along the bottom to facilitate scuttling!!!

We are wondering whether the great feast given by the people of Campden to the soldiers on the night of Jan. 6th will be described by Lord Haw-Haw from Hamburg.

Well cheerio; and don't forget if you can to notify Mr Mare, "Hooocote", Campden, GLOS of any change in your address.

The main news this month is the weather. Atishoo! Snow, atishoo! Frost, tishoo! Flu, tishoo! Bed, tishoo! Brrr-r-r; shivers and shakes; hot water bottles; sleep; nightmares. - Decide to get up and go out. - Wrap up well; get a stick; mind your step; now down the bank into street - whoosh! - 'Hey up.' Sock! Ha-ha, what a joke! Grabbed that car by the radiator; kept upright though; smart that. Brr-r-r, it's chilly; wrap up well again (why, it's blanket and quilt I'm wearing). Driver seems annoyed. Bah! I back away; road all ice; like glass; thought I'd got his radiator, but it's a hot square loaf! How did I get it? Ha, an idea - gather robes tightly round; sit on loaf; shove off with stick; - whizz! that's the way to do it - left him standing; go down Sheep Street like lightning. Now then, be careful at the corner and that loaf is wearing out. There, just as I expected, straight across High Street and bump into the phone box. Grab quick and hang on or you will be back in the street again. No use trying to stand; lie down; wrap up well, put that loaf on your chest for warmth; cool! it's heavy and lumpy. I'm sure it's leaking, I'm getting wet through; why it's that blessed radiator after all! Brr-rr, it's cold too the water is and don't the blessed thing shake. Eh? What? Why, what do you want to take my temperature for? Morning? Never. Eh? 102? Phew, haven't I been sweating! Wet through. Damn Hitler.

You have all had some of the same but perhaps your pipes have not been burst. So bad have they been here that it was suggested one of our plumbers should be released from his military duties to help clear up the mess. Plumbers have been so busy they have not had time to send their mates back for the tools but have had to get on with the job. But the thaw has now come and Campden is beginning to regain its normal appearance. One bad effect of the thaw was the need one Sunday evening between 5 and 6 for a number of our best swimmers to turn out to rescue fowls. It is not definitely known whether they wore bathing costumes - in any case gum boots were useless.

During the frost, for those who could get out, the ice-covered grass and trees were a sight which no one could ever remember having seen before. On the hills the walls were covered with about 4" thick. Walking over long grass sounded like crushing glass and the trees when they were shaken by the breeze sounded like the tinkling of cracked bells.

'Ow be 'ee will probably be heard in many parts of the world now as it is one of our phrases which struck the imagination of our visitors so impressively that it was adopted for use instead of 'good morning'.

The boss of a business firm which had been evacuated, turned up late one morning at the country mansion occupied as offices carrying something wrapped up in a handkerchief. He went to the rather big fire, unwrapped his parcel, placed a tumbler full of ice and his dentures on the hearth to thaw and explained he had been rather a long time over his breakfast. One of his staff remarked that it was biting cold that morning.

The weather, in spite of its severity, has not had all its own way and the war helped rather than hindered the match maker. Eila Goldicott was married on Jan. 22nd to Arthur Harrison and Harry Gabb, now in arms, has attached the Noel Arms and the bride to be is Miss Sanderson, mine host's daughter - all a matter of arms!

If anyone wants a woollen helmet, scarf, mittens or socks will they kindly drop a post card to

Mrs Knott, Whaddon, Campden, GLOS.

Also please notify any change of address to
Mr Mare, Hoocote, Aston Road, Campden, GLOS.

Cheerio.