



Coldean

Community & Church Magazine

Winter 2022

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A Prayer for King Charles III



Everlasting God, we pray for our new King. Bless his reign and the life of our nation.

Help us to work together so that truth and justice, harmony and fairness flourish among us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

From the Vicarage - November 2022

Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat.

Please put a penny in the old man's hat

If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do

If you haven't got a ha'penny then God bless you.

The words of this rhyme will be ringing true in so many households this year, with rises in rent, food bills going up and household fuel bills soaring there will be little even to feed a goose. Yet whilst sitting on a bus I heard parents speaking about Christmas, how much they were spending on gifts, food and drink, it was said by one Mum that for the childrens gifts she would allow £500 each she had 4 children! And then for Christmas food and drink she would need at least another £1500. When asked how she could afford it all she replied that she would do the same as always; take out a loan, she added that it would then need to be paid off in time for another loan for the summer holiday and so the cycle continued.

This of course made me stop and think, why have we allowed commercialism to take over and overshadow the true meaning of Christmas. Why do we feel that we have to be able to buy the biggest or most expensive gift.

I had a quick google search today to find the predicted most wanted gift this year:

According to Hamleys at no:1 is

XShot - Skins the Last Stand- £35 1x X-Shot Skins Last Stand Blaster – Dragon

Includes: 16x Air Pocket Technology foam darts

The largest blaster in the X-Shot Skins range

Hit multiple targets up to 27m/90ft away

14-dart capacity auto-rotating barrel

Unleash all 14 darts in seconds

Basically, how to use an automatic gun firing off up to 14 “darts” in quick succession. £35 each

Each year the TV and advertising encourages us to buy more gifts, spend more money, get into more debt. Is this really the “reason for the season”?

I think not.

We have already received the greatest gift that could ever be given and it was given to us by God in the form of a baby! Gods only Son. Born in a stable, to impoverished parents, this baby grew up to be a carpenter like his earthly father, an itinerant teacher and at about 32 years of age he died for us, giving us the gift of life everlasting. No loan company would ever be able to advance us the cost of this gift, it is priceless, yet year by year the true meaning of Christmas is eroded by the need of material goods and money.

I don't wish to sound old and boring (stop sniggering at the back) but what happened to the handmade, home made gifts, a gift made with us in mind by people who want to give us all that they can.

I remember when I was about 5, my grandad working away in his shed for weeks before the big day.

Love and prayers,

Revd. Betsy

St Mary Magdalen Church Activities December 2022

2 Dec 2022	Christmas Market 6 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.
11 Dec 2022	Charity Lunch for the Children's Society 12.30 p.m.
16 Dec 2022	Children's Christmas Party – tbc
24 Dec 2022	Children's Crib Service – 4 p.m.
24 Dec 2022	Midnight Mass – 11.30 p.m.
25 Dec 2022	Mass for Christmas Day – 10.00 a.m.

The Queue for the Lying in State

Following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September the Queue to see the Queen Lying-in-State in Westminster Hall became a phenomenon. For four days people flocked to London from all over the world to see the Coffin and the Crown Jewels.

It truly was a privilege to participate and a tribute to our Queen that so



People passing the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Hall

many wanted to queue, some people going around two or three times! For me it became like a pilgrimage, meeting up with different people along the way, journeying with them for a while and then moving on, after hearing their story. But I did acquire a constant travelling companion as well, Christine, an Austrian lady who lived in the UK for decades. She is now a good friend as we went through a very emotional and worthwhile experience together, never to be repeated. In all, having got my necessary wristband and queue number when we started in Southwark Park at 11pm on the Saturday night, it took us about 13 hours, as the queue stopped for about 1.5 hours for a rehearsal of the funeral in the early hours of Sunday morning- we went in for cups of coffee and snacks from one of the many vendors along the way open during that time.



Paddington points the way

And all along the way there were volunteers and helpers, and they were amazing. The Thameside walk passed many historical places and sites in London. On a map the distance measured about 5 miles, but in reality, lots of extra walking was added in, to fit more people into the Queue. In all I did about 40,000 steps! So not for the faint hearted. And several people did

give up (this was not shown on TV though), all for good reasons.



Debbie with friends she made in the queue

Afterwards we could replay the time on the BBC non-stop coverage when we went through Westminster Hall at about 12.20pm on Sunday, so we have that record, and that tremendous memory always. I am very glad I made it through, and felt it was the least I could do to honour our lovely Queen!

Around a quarter of a million people paid their respects in person to the Queen by viewing her coffin as it lay in state in London.

Debbie Annells

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth opens the Keep

The Queen's last official visit to East Sussex and Brighton was on 31 October 2013 when, along with Prince Philip, she visited Newhaven's fishmongers, Harvey's Brewery in Lewes, a Youth Hostel in Beddingham and finally The Keep Archive at Brighton.



A crowd of local people outside the Keep to welcome Her Majesty



The Duke of Edinburgh, Christopher Whittick from the Keep, Dr Fiona Courage from Sussex University and the Queen. © The Keep

After looking at some of the documents stored there Her Majesty performed the official opening of the Keep.

Sussex University's Special Collections and archive material from East Sussex and Brighton and Hove City Councils are stored there.



The visit ended with her Majesty unveiled a stone marking the event. As her Majesty left she was presented with flowers by people from the local area.



Ian Ginn, Memories of Coldean

My parents came from London and I spent some of my early years travelling between Brighton and London. My mum and dad stayed with my dad's parents and I was born at the Brighton General Hospital in Elm Grove, Brighton.

My nan and granddad lived in Mafeking Road and my dad walked along Mafeking Road and over Tenantry Down Road to the hospital in Elm Grove. My nan and granddad had also moved from London because my nan suffered from asthma. My granddad was a higher-grade postman and he was able to swap from London to Brighton. Mafeking Road was just being built then and they managed to buy their house for £100.

When my parents first came from London, they just had a couple of rooms in a house in Ewhurst Road and the rooms faced uphill towards Mafeking Road.

Later we moved from Ewhurst Road to 100 Lyminster Avenue in Hollingbury. Brighton Council had just built the houses and my mum and dad had the upstairs flat, I do not know who lived downstairs.

We moved to 22 Twyford Road in Coldean in 1954, when I was 6 years old and just starting school and we were the first people to live in the house. The northern end of Coldean village was being built in 1954 and 1955.

I can remember that we had a cement mixer in the garden. I had thought it was going to be left in our garden for me to play with but it got moved to Hawkhurst Road.

My first school was Coldean with Mr. Burrows as the head master and Mr Bowyer as deputy. Mr Bowyer unfortunately had a heart attack and died at an early age and a cherry tree was planted in memory of him. I have some photographs which my parents had of the planting of a cherry tree in his memory.

The one thing that stands out in my mind was that when we went to Coldean School the dew pond was open in the top part of the field and was always quite full and we would get tadpoles and bring them home.

I joined the 18th Brighton Cubs on 10 December 1957 and the scouts on March 1960 and remember fondly Mr Elms (Chill) and Mr. Nickerson (Skip). I was also, a member of the St. Mary Magdalen Church Choir and my mother belonged to the "Young Wives Group" at the church.

I remember that when I was in the church choir, I was on a stage at the back of the church but the stage is no longer there. The stage was removed when the new entrance, was built in 1971 at the same time as the hall was built. When the hall was built it was thought that activities should go on in the hall rather than the church.



Church Parade in the late 1950s with Fr Cyril Bess presiding. Ian Ginn is on the extreme right of the picture.

The church organ was on the right hand side of the stage against the wall with the choir sitting on rows of chairs on the rest of the stage at the back of the church. The organ was a pipe organ but was sold and replaced by one that came from Bevendean when we thought that the church there had been closed in 2007.

I also remember that there were doors which closed in front of the altar. However, these were removed when a new floor was installed in 2017.

I attended the Consecration Service held on 22 July 2022 for St Mary Magdalen Church and bought a church magazine.

Different people had the shops in Beatty Avenue, Arthur Holder had the Butchers shop, Stanley Morris had the Grocer's shop, Mr Bernard Olver was the chemist, he was a churchwarden at St Mary Magdalen Church for a while. I remember his daughter who was the same age as my brother, she

died a little while ago, at a young age. She was horse mad and had a horse on the slope at the back of the shops.

Then there was the Confectioners and the Post Office, run by Mr. Hobday, next to that down the slope was the doctor's surgery. The doctor's surgery

THE BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION

Wolf Cub Enrolment Card

NAME IAN GINN

PACK 18TH BRIGHTON. (ST MARY MAGDALEN) COLDEAN

DATE OF ENROLMENT 10-12-57

AGE 8 1/2 E. Nicholson
S. H. Cubmaster.

	DATE	CERTIFIED BY
Obtained First Star - - -	17-1-59	<u>E. Nicholson</u>
Obtained Second Star - - -	23-10-59	<u>E. Nicholson</u>
Obtained Leaping Wolf - - -	—	
Appointed Second - - -	12-12-58	<u>E. Nicholson</u>
Appointed Sixer - - -	-/2/60	<u>E. Nicholson</u>
Became Scout - - -	13/60	<u>E. Nicholson</u>

Wolf Cub Enrolment Card for Ian Ginn.

is now in New Larchwood. Later two more shops were built, next to the surgery, one was the hairdressers and the other was a greengrocer.

I remember that the doctor's surgery had a great big fish tank in the window but you could not see anything because it was all always green. A little lady, Mrs Farmer, used to do the cleaning in there and whenever you went in there you had to walk over sheets of paper, you never saw the floor in its natural state it always had newspaper on it.

My father was on the Coldean Self-Build Housing Association and in 1962 we moved to Selba Drive in Moulsecomb. He also founded the Coldean Community Association along with, I recall, Mr Alfred Hutchings.

We lived in a council house and my dad worked on the self-build scheme at Selba Drive, which took about 30 months to build, and that is at the back of Moulsecomb.

Although it was a Coldean Self Build Association the bungalows were built in Selba Drive. The men involved all came from Coldean. The man behind many of the self-build schemes in Brighton was Councillor Desmond Manton.

I was just changing schools when we moved to Selba Drive and went to Stanmer School, although I think we still lived in Coldean for a year and that was my excuse to get a push bike to go to Stanmer School from Coldean. My father was one of the last people to move into Selba Drive and I think I was then 12.

Selba Drive took about 31 months to build and the bungalows cost £1,700 each, when they were finished. My parents' house was the most expensive along with a chap called Len Early because they both had Parquet flooring in the hall and the lounge whereas everyone else just had Marley tiles put down on the floor.

I remember my mother saying to my father, "you spent all that money on the floors, but would not buy me a floor polisher".

To me Coldean will always be home and several times I have moved back and still keep my house in Standean Close, which is currently rented out. I would describe Coldean as being a rural area it was always very nice. Mr Brown was the school caretaker; he was a jolly fella who had the Parquet floors swept with damp sawdust. I can always remember the smell of that. He always walked with a bit of a wobble as if he had a bad leg and I think that he would have been in his 40s, he always had a grey boiler suite on. Coal for the school boiler was delivered from a lorry which had a conveyor belt to deliver the coal down into the boiler room under the school canteen. Ash from the boiler was carried out by hand.

Mr Brown did not live in the house built in the ground of the school; he lived at 84 Beatty Avenue a couple of doors along from the Hutchins who lived at 74. His back garden looked down onto the school grounds, the house in the school grounds was quite a new addition compared to the rest of the estate.

When my mum came from London, after her mother died, she lived with an auntie. She used to go to the Girl Guides held along the Lewes Road and the Guide leader at the time was Bessy Bates who was part of the Bates family. They had a large orchard, where there is now an estate of flats. It is a crying shame that there are flats where there used to be lots of lovely apples. In

later years I went out with her daughter Evelyn Longley, for a while, who was part of the Bates family who lived in Coldean Lane.

When I took the girl home it turned out that her mum was my mother's guide leader. Bessy Bates married Bill Longley and they had one of the private houses along Coldean Lane.

We used to go off into the woods and fields when I lived at Coldean. We had posh bikes for going to school. However together with a friend of mine we had what we called track bikes. These were made up from old bikes using an old frame and wheels and tyres and we would cycle through the woods and come home covered in mud. If you came home with more mud than anyone else it meant that you had had a good time. It was not allowed because the park wardens used to drive round the woods in his little Land Rover. When he came round, we would hide and then come out and carry on when he had gone.

Everyone thinks this is a new thing, but we were doing this in the 1960s. The bikes were made up from spare parts. We went to Mr. Trotman who lived in George Street in Brighton and he had old bikes there, probably, bikes which had been traded in. The bikes were disabled so they could not be ridden, perhaps the chain had been removed or the tyres were flat, so he would let you take these bikes home for spare parts.

Another thing I remember about being in the cubs was if you were the cub of the month, you would take the flag home on Friday evening and clean the leaping wolf on the top of the flag pole. Then once a month on the Sunday when it was church parade we met outside the shops and the cubs and scouts would walk down the slope to Selham Drive and then to the church. It was quite an honour to take the flag home on a Friday night. The leaping wolf was the symbol of the cubs. Mr Nicholson, our cubs Skip, lived in a house on the corner between Selham Drive and Beatty Avenue, there were two houses across the corner at the junction of Beatty Avenue and Hawkhurst Road.

Mr Chill worked for a seed merchant and there were always flowers in front of his house. He would sweep out the car once a week and throw the seed dust on the front garden and so he would have an array of flowers all year round.

There were allotments behind the houses in Park Road and Rushlake Road where Rushlake Close is today and we had an allotment there for quite a

few years. My father used to take us to the allotments in his homemade wheel barrow. After church I went down in the wheel barrow with my dad and would meet my lifelong friend Graham Rumsey who lived in Park Road. The only entrance I can remember to the allotments was at the top of the hill in Park Road. There was a little entrance at the top just before the junction with Ridge View.

There are three new houses built there with oak cladding on the fronts, quite modern looking for the time. I remember there were people up in arms about them saying they looked more like a cowboy's den. The houses had white bricks at the bottom and wooden cladding above where you would normally have had tiles hanging. They were just long lengths of wood sliced out from the tree and they are still there as far as I am aware. People complained that they looked like a shanty town.

Our garden at home had raspberries and gooseberry bushes in the back garden, all the vegetables were mainly grown on the allotment.

A few years before we moved from Coldean, the council took down one of the prefab houses in Rushlake Road and built a close of bungalows behind Park Road, that was the land for the original allotments in Coldean.

The allotments then moved to where they are now on Coldean Lane opposite the bottom of Hawkhurst Road, which was the site of the Menagerie Farm. That is where the Coldean Horticultural Society operated from now.

The Mormon Church at the top of Park Road has not been a church for 20 odd years because it moved to the corner of the Lewes Road and Hollingdean Road near to Sainsbury and Saunders Park. Plans have been approved to build two blocks of flats on the former church site. Work started in 2022 and when completed will provide 12 flats.

Arthur West who was the last farmer in Coldean lived in the house nearest to Coldean Lane at the bottom of Park Road. This was a detached house whereas the other houses in the road are semidetached.

The house on the corner of Rushlake Road and Park Road was also a detached house and that was owned by the managing director of Allen West (No. 12 Park Road). In Coldean you could not get a very good signal, not that we had a television set while we lived there, but he had a very tall mast built in his back garden with an aerial on top. He had two garages but I think that the people who live there now do not use them anymore.

I do not remember much about the farming in Coldean, except for going over the field when they were cutting the grass and the farmer put buckets of molasses on the grass, spreading it with brushes and layering the grass up in the summer time.

I remember that where there is a new block of flats in the centre of Coldean there used to be a park. It was really just a piece of waste ground at the junction of Waldron Avenue and Beatty Avenue. This is where New Larchwood was built which is a block of old peoples flats with a doctor's surgery included. Before the original Larchwood was built, there was just a rough piece of ground where we played cricket and there was a sand pit towards the Waldron Avenue end. There was also a steam roller and an old lorry parked there, we would climb all over them and pretend that we were driving them and they were there for many years. You would not be able to do that now because someone might slide off the roof and hurt themselves.

We had a routine every morning, our mother gave my brother and I one shilling. On our way to school, we would go into Morrison's and buy a long-split loaf which was 11.5 pence and then go into the sweet shop and with our half penny buy two Harvey's black jacks, which was our treat on the way to school. On our way home at lunchtime we would call into Morrison's and pick up the loaf to take home with us.

An old single decker coach came round the estate twice a week. All the seats had been taken out except for the driver's seat and the one next to him and it was fitted out with racks for fruit and vegetables so it was effectively a mobile grocer and green grocers. At the time Brooke Bond and Typhoo were giving away cards in the tea packets and the driver had a little rack for spare cards so that if you were missing a card, you could give him one you had two of in exchange for one you did not have. He also sold tea, tinned beans and other non-perishable goods. But it created a bit of a dingdong because on alternate days the Coop came round in a big removal style lorry. You went in the back where there was a little counter, my mum used to leave the book with her order and later the man would knock at the door and give her what she had ordered and tell her how much it was. When she had paid him, he would sign her book. They carried everything including ham, pieces of meat and so on, the lorry was effectively a travelling Coop store. They had a bacon slicer and things like that, it was all very well laid out.

On a Friday the fish man came round and if you wanted him to call you put a plate in the window and he would come to the door so my mum could tell him what fish she wanted. He would then go back to the van and bring the fish to the door. This was wet fish for my mum to cook for us.

During the winter time the paraffin lady came round. You would leave your cans by the front door and she would fill them up and bring them back and knock on the front door. I remember now that my mother would give the lady the money and she would be given the change. My mother had an old China plate that the lady would put the money on because it was all covered in paraffin. My mother would then boil a kettle of water and pour it over the money to get rid of the smell of the paraffin. The lady's hands were wet with paraffin and must have been very sore.

For a new estate it was quite well covered for all amenities, there was, a doctor, butchers, the grocers and the chemist Mr Olver.

My dad along with Mr Hutchins who was quite well known at the church formed the Coldean Community Association. They used to have dances on a Saturday night in the school junior hall and they also used to run the bingo on a Friday evening after the cubs had finished. They would set up the tables and sort things out to get their bingo underway.

Saturday nights was the Community Association Dances, one night they had a problem when a load of teddy boys turned up to join the dancing at the school. I think that the police were called and there was a bit about it in the local paper.

I can remember Fr Bess who was a portly gentleman and his wife who was always at his side whatever was going on and whatever was being done. My mother was a good supporter of the church and my father too. My mother went to the young wives group in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

My birthday being the first of April actually fell on Easter Sunday one year and Mrs Goble who ran the Young Wives group made me a Simnel cake and converted it to a birthday cake. I cannot remember the year. (Easter Sunday fell on the first of April in 1956).

From Coldean we moved to Moulsecoomb and for a few years I continued to go to Coldean church and was in the choir.

I then went to St Andrews for two reasons. My father was in the choir at St Andrews when the first church was built and it seemed good to stand and sing where my father would have sung. This would probably have been about 1964 or 1965, Fr Money was there at the time and so was Tony Pannett.

Ian Ginn - September 2022

Reverend Derek Harold Cordell 1934 to 2022

Derek Harold Cordell was born in the early months of 1934 in the registration district of West Ham in Essex.

He studied at Chichester Theological College from 1957 and was made a deacon in 1960 and priested in 1961 and served as a Curate at All Saints Church in Whitstable, Kent until 1963.

He then served as a Curate in the Parish of Moulsecomb between 1963 and 1969 at St Mary Magdalen Church in Coldean.

Next, he worked as the Anglican Chaplain to the British Communities in Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia at the Church of the Resurrection in Bucharest in the Diocese of Europe from 1969 to 1971.

Fr Derek then came back to Brighton as the Vicar of St Wilfrid in Elm Grove where he worked between 1971 and 1974.

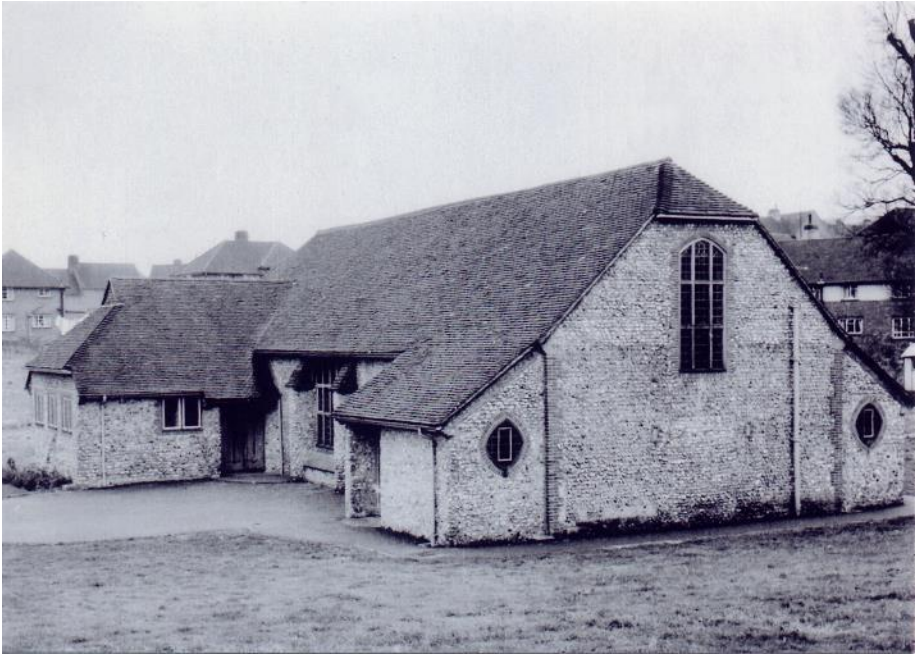
After this he worked as a Chaplain in HM Borstal Rochester from 1974 to 1980, and then he became an Assistant Chaplain at HM Prison Manchester from 1980 to 1981.

This was followed by a spell as Chaplain at HM Prison 'The Verne' on the island of Portland from 1981 to 1989. His next appointment was as the Chaplain at HM Prison Channings Wood located in the parish of Ogwell in Devon from 1989 to 1990.

He then spent 2 years from 1990 to 1991 serving as the Chaplain in Milan w Genoa and Varese in the Diocese of Europe in Italy.

This was followed by a Chaplaincy at Mojácar in Southern Spain from 1991 to 1994 again in the Diocese of Europe.

From 1995 he had permission to officiate at church services in Devon.



Coldean Church in the 1960s picture supplied by Fr Derek Cordell

He retired in 1997 and was living at Seaton in Devon at the time of his death on 2 November 2022 at the age of 88.

Order of St Richard awarded to Coldean Churchwarden

On Saturday the 8th October 2022, twenty-six people were invested with the order of St Richard in Chichester Cathedral by the Bishop of Chichester, the Very Reverend Dr Martin Warner, at a Choral Evensong Service.

The Order of St Richard was founded in 2019 and is awarded to Lay people in recognition and celebration of their exceptional service to the parish, the local community and the Diocese. A number people from each Archdeaconry are awarded the Order of St Richard every year.

At the service the recipients of the award received a badge bearing the episcopal coat of arms of St Richard attached to a ribbon. The recipients also received a certificate signed by Bishop Martin.



Those who receive the award of the Order of St Richard today are people who, in the words of St Richard, know, love and follow Jesus, and as such they are an inspiration to all of us.



A group photograph of all the recipients of the order of Saint Richard with Bishop Martin

Among those receiving the award this year was John Phillips from St Mary Magdalen, Coldean, Brighton who was nominated for his work with youth in the parish and diocese. He expressed surprised when he heard he had been nominated.

He said: "I don't think I've been awarded anything since I left university. I've been helping with the youth camp for 30 years since the early 1990s. It was clear that the vicar needed some help cooking and that is when my wife and I stepped in.

Originally, we had a group of young people from the church at the camps. A camp was held at the end of May each year and then a second camp in the summer holidays.

Today there is just the camp at the end of May which I am still involved with. I stopped camping soon after I reached the age of 70, but I still help to run the information office travelling daily to the camp site."



Bishop Martin with John Phillips, his wife Marjorie and daughter Alison, who first got him involved in Diocesan Youth camps in 1992

Photographs and text from the Diocese of Chichester

Life in the Land Army - Eileen Jones

I started work at the Standard Tablet Company, in Hove when I was 14. The work was pretty grim and after three years I volunteered to join the Land



Army. The idea of working in the fresh air really appealed to me, and it meant that I could leave home. It wasn't long before I got my orders, and was given a chit to get to Lewes by train. I can remember, walking up the hill from Lewes Station when my case burst open and my clothes came out. A soldier helped me put them back and he had some rope in his pocket and tied it all up for me.

I went to the Land Army office and waited with other girls to find out where we were to go. We were issued with uniform; brown breeches, aertex shirts, green jerseys, an overcoat

and a felt hat. We had a mackintosh like a black oilskin and a fisherman's style hat, which nobody liked very much but you had to wear them or get wet through. Also, I got a permit to buy a Thermos flask to take a hot drink to work. We wore our own scarves and I met a lady, who managed to obtain a yard or two of material, and cut it down to make three cornered scarves. We were pleased to pay her for a scarf because you could only buy one if you had a coupon.

Although we were not given any training, we were suitably equipped with a uniform however replacing it was difficult. Once a month we could go to the office in Lewes to replace things which were worn out. I'd never queued

anywhere for so long, or told so many fibs in my life, I even made the holes a bit bigger just to get something new. After going to the Land Army office, we went to a tea room across the road and although it wasn't wonderful, everyone used to be in there and it was really nice to meet other Land Army girls. At first, I was sent to a billet at Hampden Park, mine was not a nice place and I was unhappy living there. We had to walk from our billets to the main road out of Eastbourne from where we were picked up and taken to where they needed us to work. When I started it was harvest time and after walking to the fields from the road, we had to collect the individual sheaves of wheat and stack them together to make stooks ready to be picked up by the wagons. We walked for miles and miles, it was a long day and very, very hard work but it was lovely to be out in the open. There was however one thing that we all grumbled about because we thought it was unfair. We had to walk miles up to the fields from the main road to begin our work but the prisoners who were sent to work on the fields from Lewes Prison, were taken up in vans. Of course, it didn't dawn on us at the time it was done because otherwise the prisoners might abscond! After this I was sent to Jevington to work on a machine which made thatching mats to cover the ricks. It was a wonderful job by the side of the road so no walking across miles of fields. You fed straw into a machine, just like a massive sewing machine, and the mats it made were similar to the mats that people use on the beach, like a bamboo mat with two seams. Soon after this, many girls were sent back to Brighton because we were told there were not enough billets.

Once again, I was living at home and each day, we went to the market garden centre in Circus Street where there was a big wholesale market. We were picked up in a lorry and taken to different spots where we were needed to work. I wasn't very happy there; however, the ganger was a good lady who worked as hard as everybody else. For one job we were taken to a farm at South Heighton for potato picking, which meant bending all day long. That was made tolerable because the girls I was with were a good crowd and we tried to make it fun; to make light of difficult and hard things.

Later we were ordered by the War Agricultural Committee to report to the depot at Patcham and from then on, we were sent to different parts of Brighton, wherever land had been confiscated for growing food. It was all basic manual labour and whatever job came along you just did it, maybe

pulling sugar beet, or cutting kale, we even went stone picking in the wheat fields during winter, a job done by children in Victorian days.

The worst job I ever did was at a farm opposite the Downs Hotel in Woodingdean, where now there are bungalows. The wartime Agricultural Committee had the power to take over any farm if it was not producing enough or had been neglected. You'd never believe the height of manure in the cowsheds it was higher than I am tall. I don't know how on earth the cows ever got in there! We had to pull out all the manure and clean the walls. As we pulled out shovels full, of filthy sloshy green black slime we tied scarves around our mouths so we didn't breathe it in because the stench was unbelievable. We also smoked to try to take the smell away.



A Land Army girl loading a tractor trailer in an unidentified field near the coast in Brighton, c1940.

When we'd cleared the manure, which was later spread on the fields, we had to scrape the walls so that we could whitewash them. You had to take it lightly and make it fun and laugh because it was really dreadful and we said that nowhere in the rest of our lives would we ever come any lower than manure scraping from walls. We all helped each other and I was lucky

because being the youngest one the other girls mothered me, and yes, it was quite good actually, I was happy with them, very happy. One bitterly cold day when the snow was thick on the ground we were working on threshing and we were only allowed half an hour for lunch. We buried ourselves in the loose straw that had come from the threshing machine to eat our sandwiches. For fun we thought we'd paddle in the snow because it's supposed to do your circulation good. We took off our shoes and boots and paddled in the snow and dried our feet with old pieces of sacking but believe me it didn't work! At the time it seemed good fun and that's the kind of things that kept you going. The work was really hard, especially in the summer when you'd be working in the fields from half past seven in the morning to about ten o'clock at night. As well as working all day about twice a month we had to do fire watching. This was in the barns where the tractors were stored and we slept there on makeshift beds. It was hard to keep yourself awake. We were supposed to record sirens and raids in a book and I remember one morning the newsagent opposite the barns told us there'd been a siren in the night. We had all been asleep but he helped us out because he said, 'I know you girls are tired, but I'll tell you there was a raid in the night at... put it in the book!'

The social life was alright while you were in your best uniform. But I can remember getting on a bus coming back from Patcham, having done manure spreading and people moved away from me. Another time I remember going to the, Astoria cinema, and I hadn't changed the trousers that I'd been using at work in the fields that day. People actually got up and changed their seats but I didn't realise until I got outside that the warmth in the cinema brought out all the smell of the dung - I never did that again! I left the Land Army in February 1946. We had to return most of the uniform, although we were allowed to keep the shoes and the overcoat. It was hard because after three years in the Land Army I'd worn out or grown out of all my civilian clothes. We were not given coupons or money to buy replacement clothes because Churchill reckoned that we didn't warrant it because we were civilians. But the thing that really hurt me was that I couldn't buy the bike which I had used on the farm.

One afternoon a few years ago I heard a radio programme about Land Girls which talked about the role we played during the war when the countryside had been drained of its traditional male workforce. The Land Army girls,

milked, ploughed, sowed seeds, threshed and toiled on the land from morning until night to keep food production going. Imported food was in short supply for in his efforts to starve Britain into submission many ships had fallen to Hitler's U-boats. After Dunkirk when all our soldiers had been brought home, there was only three weeks supply of food left in this country? It shook me to hear that but it made me feel very proud in my mind and heart that I'd volunteered to work on the land to help keep our country free.

At the time we never got any official recognition but on 28th January 2008, sixty-two years after the end of the Second World War, Hilary Benn, the Secretary of State for Environment, announced the Government's decision to award a badge of recognition to female war veterans who worked on the Home Front to provide food and timber for the nation during the Second World War.



The specially designed badge recognised the tremendous efforts of the Women's Land Army and Women's Timber Corps and acknowledged the debt that the country owed them. The badge bears the Royal Crown and shows a gold wheat sheaf on a white background surrounded by a circlet of pine branches and pine cones to indicate the work of both the Land Army and the Timber Corps.

Edited extracts from an oral history interview by Eileen Jones recorded at her home on 25th February 2009 for the © Oral History Collection,

Royal Pavilion and Museums (Brighton & Hove).

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