

*The
Cheshire
Smile*



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THE CHESHIRE SMILE

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EDITORIAL SMILES
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Greetings, gentle readers! We trust that you are well - as well as can be expected. Yes? Good show!

May we present you with the first number of our third volume. It's a pity that we have been forced to draw in our horns a good deal in respect of size and format owing to high production costs. We are unable to dress up the magazine in the more attractive type which we had been hoping to use.

But how we have grown since that first "C.S." was launched in December, 1954! That parochial magazine about Le Court life and its friends has grown into a paper whose parish is, indeed, world-wide. If the ideals of our august founder are realised we shall soon be reporting Homes springing up in many foreign parts.

And whilst on the subject of opening Homes, we were particularly interested in a point made in an article elsewhere in this issue about an American experiment called "New Horizons". They are up against the problem - very familiar to us - of whether to start a Home in existing buildings or to build new ones. There are obviously things to be said in favour of both ways. We in the Cheshire organisation shall soon have had a great deal of experience of both and it is hoped to publish a comparative estimate sometime in the future.

We continue to receive new expressions of the suggestion, previously noticed here, that the Cheshire Smile should be the means of interchanging ideas between all the Homes - ideas about both the material and spiritual environment. It has not yet caught on. But we certainly intend to persevere in urging the Homes to use our pages for this very important purpose. It could well lead on to a regular interchange of patients and staff between all the Homes - surely a very desirable development.

Owing to a last-minute hitch two articles that we intended to publish this time have had to be held over until June - the one, a feature on St. Teresa's Home in Cornwall, and the other, a profile of Molly Conibear of Le Court.

Frank Spath

A WORD FROM GABRIEL MARCEL

"My deepest and most unshakeable conviction - and if it is heretical so much the worse for orthodoxy - is that whatever all the thinkers and doctors have said, it is not God's will at all to be loved by us against the Creation, but rather glorified through the Creation and with the Creation as our starting-point. That is why I find so many devotional books intolerable. The God who is set up against the Creation and who is somehow jealous of his own works is, to my mind, nothing but an idol."

A SUGGESTION

As many of you know Le Court is built on a sort of raft foundation. It has been suggested that we move out to sea, beyond the three mile limit. Think of the advantages - cut price drinks and cigarettes, a dip on Christmas Day, somewhere to throw people who make silly suggestions Help!

NOT LIKE OUR CAT

One society lady to another - "The only good thing about you is your own opinion of yourself."

REPORTED HEARD AT LE COURT

"You wouldn't believe this, but when I came here I was big-headed and conceited; now I'm one of the nicest blokes you could ever wish to meet."

REPORT FROM WHITE WINDOWS

Since the last issue of the "Cheshire Smile" many of the suggested alterations to the Home have been carried out, and it is hoped to have all completed by the end of April.

We now have washbasins in each bedroom and bedlights and signalling systems are being installed. Work is in progress raising floor levels in the basement and making openings through two feet thick walls to enable wheel chair patients to propel themselves out to the terraces overlooking the gardens. Trees which are too close to one side of the house are being felled to allow more light to enter the rooms. The lift is in hand and nearing completion at the makers and the builders have just started making the holes for the lift shaft.

We now have five patients and by the time this article is published it is expected that we shall have seven. Our latest arrival was Derek Hubble who had been a patient at Wardour Castle and was one of the main inspirations behind Mr. R.H. Blackburn's determination to work for a Cheshire Home in the West Riding.

The garden has already been voluntarily laid out by professionals and stocked with bulbs, rose trees and many other plants.

For the entertainment of patients a Phillips Projection Television has been installed and also an Ambassador Television, both of them most generously donated to the Home.

Lino Tiles, in varying colours, have already arrived for covering the floors throughout the Home, but the laying of them will be the final task when all other work is completed.

In common with all the other Homes we have the problem of attracting State Registered Nurses to our staff. As White Windows is registered as a Nursing Home it is essential that this problem be solved in order to comply with the conditions of registration.

Our official opening day is to be on Saturday 18th May when we shall have the pleasure of the company of Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, V.C., our worthy Founder, and all the patients, staff, management and hundreds of West Riding people will give him a real West Riding welcome.

"VISRANTHI ILLAM"

The above title means "a home of peace and rest." It is the name that has been given to the Cheshire Home for Lepers at Katpadi in South India.

The Home was opened on 11th September 1956 by Dr. Ida Scudder, Principal, Christian Mission College and Hospital at nearby Vellore. The local Catholic bishop gave a blessing.

We hear that there was much opposition by the people to the founding of such a Home, arising from their dread of the disease. All the 10 patients there in January were disabled burnt-out lepers, incurable destitutes who have been cast out, thrown away, by their own people. In the Home they are all treated as of one family. They are given all possible necessities and work only according to capability.

The Hon. Secretary and Lady-in-Charge is Mrs. P. Chimoradorai.

ST. TERESA'S
FAREWELL TO A MATRON

Miss E. Belcher retired in January from the post of Matron, which she had held for the last 2½ years. The patients and staff presented her with a compact at a concert on Tuesday 22nd January. On the previous day, the Management Committee held a farewell dinner at the Queen's Hotel, Penzance, for her and presented her with a cheque in token of their appreciation.

She spoke, at the dinner, of how the general public had little knowledge of the type of patient for whom G/Capt. Cheshire founded these Homes. Until she went to St. Teresa's, even she, as a nurse, had no idea of how great was the need for such Homes, which was borne out by the number of applications, arriving almost daily.

Lady St. Levan said that no one had realised before Miss Belcher came what a lot of remedial work could be done for the bodies of the patients by giving them encouragement and help.

Miss Susan Brewer has taken over as temporary Matron.

THE CHESHIRE HOMES IN ENGLAND

1. Le Court, Liss, Hants.
2. St.Teresa's, Long Rock, Penzance, Cornwall.
3. St.Cecilia's, Bromley, Kent.
4. St.Bridget's, East Preston, Sussex.
5. Amphill Park House, Bedfordshire.
6. Staunton Harold, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.
7. Alne Hall, Alne, York.
8. White Windows, Sowerby Bridge, Yorkshire.
9. London - It is hoped to open a home in London as soon as possible.

THE CHESHIRE HOMES IN INDIA

1. Marian House, Kodai Hills, South India.
 2. Bethlehem House, Andheri, Bombay.
 3. Shanti Rani House, Serampore, West Bengal.
 4. Govind Phavan, Dehra Dun, U.P.
 5. Katpadi, near Vellore, Madras, South India. (for lepers)
 6. Kalkaji, Delhi.
 7. Shillong, Assam - Plans are afoot to open a home here.
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ALNE HALL NEWS BULLETIN

We all had a grand time at Christmas! This was largely due to the kindness of Messrs. Rowntrees Social Service Committee who have installed a 17" screen T.V. set, given HUGE quantities of sweets, provided an illuminated tree and gifts and a TERRIFIC party.

Large hampers of Christmas cheer were received from the nearby village of Helperby and from "Commercial Plastics" of North Shields - one of whose ex-employees is a patient here.

Decorative lighting was installed voluntarily by employees of the York Electricity authorities.

Matron and her staff made a tremendous effort to ensure everyone having a good time on this, our first Christmas in our new home.

Film shows are given regularly, again by Rowntrees. Free seats and transport provided for the weekly matinee at the theatre are postponed temporarily because of the petrol situation.

STAUNTON HAROLD TREE-FELLING AND CENTRAL HEATING

All our news lately is of noises - the noise of tree-felling and the noise of central heating contractors.

Firstly, we are felling a number of old trees which were about to tumble, and replanting thousands of new ones so that the beauty of our surroundings is preserved for future generations.

As for the central heating, we are walking about warily in case pipes suddenly appear through walls, and holes are found where they never were before. One day we shall perhaps be clear of workmen, but when we are life will have lost a good deal of its adventure.

We are looking forward to being hosts to the other Homes on 27th April, and can only hope that petrol rationing won't affect it too much.

Our patients are just recovering from the hectic Christmas round when all our Friends rallied to the cause and virtually took over the running of the Home for a whole day! Everybody survived - even the Friends!

LE COURT BULLETIN

The Garden Fete will be held this year on Saturday 20th July. Details will be announced later.

Christmas Day, 1956, at Le Court was in the best traditions of the season - a very happy and homely festival. Religious services for Anglicans and Catholics, a really excellent dinner, (provided as usual by the National Hospital, Queen Square, London.) Father Christmas, Mr. Jack Dunn of Longmoor, distributing presents, Christmas cake galore! But this had been preceded by the usual party given by the Ladies Circle of Petersfield on 15th December. And also by carols provided by choirs from Rogate and Liss, and a very well-acted Nativity-mine by the St. Mary's (Portchester) Youth Fellowship. Christmas was rounded off for us with a family party on 27th December organised by Bill Roberts and Mrs. Taylor. We want to thank all the kind people who arranged these festivities and all those who sent us gifts in money and kind.

A recent addition to the Chapel of the Assumption is a beautiful wooden plaque of Our Lady, Health of the Sick, carved by Michael Clark.

The resurfacing of the last section of the drive makes it much easier for traffic coming to and going from the Home. Those of us who go out in the ambulance certainly appreciate the advantage of having smooth tarmac right up to the courtyard.

Recent visitors seem to have been impressed by the newly-installed modern display case in the entrance. Le Courtiers have always wanted a "shop-window" to show off the arts and crafts they make. This fits the bill perfectly. Now we have to learn the art of window-dressing!

The Alton Cage Bird Society continue to take a great interest in our budgerigars. It is planned to reconstruct the aviary soon with their help.

Sir Charles Woolley, a former Governor of Cyprus and now one of the Le Court Management Committee, gave us an enlightening talk on Cyprus, its past, present and future.

WRAC Cadet Officers at Huron Camp, Hindhead, entertained a party of us one evening in January. "Great fun!" said the party.

PERSONAL ITEMS

We are pleased to say that our new sister-in-Charge, who arrived in December, has been given a very warm welcome. She is Miss Rosemary Clarke, who comes to us from Bristol Royal Infirmary where she was First Assistant Matron. As was said on another occasion, all that she has done so far augurs well for the future. That word "God-sent" has been quite overworked since her arrival!

Miss Marion Permain, aged 96, our oldest inhabitant, passed away peacefully in January. She had been here for seven years, but during the last two had not moved much out of her room. All who knew her agree that she was a wonderful old lady - in fact, a gentlewoman in every sense of the word.

Readers of our last issue will remember the profile of Mrs. Taylor. We regret to say that she has now left us, her arthritis having got progressively worse, and is at present staying at the Holy Cross Hospital, Haslemere. There was a farewell supper in her honour at which she was presented with a travelling clock - a small token of appreciation from all the patients and staff. It seems strange at Le Court without Mrs. Taylor!

Another departure to announce is that of Miss Norma Fraser, our visiting occupational therapist for the last two years. She has gone to the Royal Devonshire Hospital, Exton.

Mrs. Peggy Roberts has taken up a full-time job at St. Mary's Home, Alton, and much to her regret can't come to Le Court as often as she has been doing.

The teaching of handicrafts has now been taken over by Miss Doris Willmot of Alton, to whom we extend a cordial welcome.

Miss French-Mullen, the Secretary at Le Court, recently volunteered to go over and help at Amptill Park for a fortnight during a difficult period for the Home.

Mr. Patrick Stewart, M.C. who has sat on the Management Committee for 4½ years, serving as Chairman for the last two, is retiring at the end of March. He is attending the patients house meeting on the 30th to say farewell and to be thanked for all he has done.

The latest addition to the Management Committee is Sir Ernest Gowers, G.C.B., G.B.E., who has held many high-ranking posts in the Civil Service, has acted as chairman of

several important government committees and wrote the well-known "Plain Words, a guide to the use of English". He happens to be the father of Lady Shiffner, one of our voluntary "slaves".

David Stothard is the latest permanent patient to be gathered into the family.

NIGHT NURSE'S LAMENT

How sad was I; how tired and worn,
The night was long, and slow the morn,
The day had given but little sleep,
And e'en that was far from deep.
Arriving with my junior on the ward,
We had met the patient already on board
The theatre trolley, and another to be done
Later. The day-nurse said, Have fun!
Then she was gone, and I was left alone.
Oh, botheration! there goes the phone.
'Twas night Sister on the other end of the line,
She wished to change someone's off-duty and of course it
was mine.
My junior's in theatre, so I must run.
There are enemās to be given and bedpans to be done.
Then the patients must all be tucked down for the night.
I think I had too much breakfast - my apron's tight!
Make up the theatre bed: she'll be returning soon.
I wonder whether I'll be off nights by June.
Here comes the doctor, What's that you say, sir?
The other new patient is not going to theatre.
But you're putting a drip up - now isn't that jolly?
If you'll wait five minutes, sir, I'll lay up a trolley.
Here comes the operation case escorted by nurse
She doesn't look too bad; I've seen a lot worse.
The night is nearly over, yet there's still a lot more work
Washings, making beds, Come on nurse, we must not shirk.
Good morning, Sister: yes, the report is just ready.
No, it hasn't been too bad, the work has been steady
Come on, nurse, we too can go off duty.
If I don't get some sleep soon I'll be losing all my
beauty.

Elaine Brocklebank

MORE ABOUT FREEDOM

(A friend of Le Court continues the discussion we inaugurated last September.)

One September evening in 1955, just as dusk was falling, I staggered up the drive to Le Court, case in hand, heart in mouth. This was my first visit. I was about to serve a three week apprenticeship as a 'slave'. I was full of apprehension. Three weeks later I departed down the drive enriched and full of resolutions to return: I did, several times. In fact, in the following year I was privileged to spend altogether four months at Le Court 'slaving'.

I shared Christmas 1955 with Le Courtiers - one of the happiest I have ever spent - and most of the summer of 1956. Then, I really felt I was sharing Le Court's family life at work and play - helping prepare for the Fete, getting another 'Cheshire Smile' into circulation, exhibiting at the Alton Show, celebrating at the 'Temple' public house, going out in the bus to Farnborough Air Show, to cricket matches, to the cinema and to Church. With every visit I make to Le Court there is an increasing reluctance to leave.

I feel very humble and very grateful that I have been permitted to share in the life of this 'well ordered family'. Le Courtiers have shown me happiness has scarcely anything to do with getting what we want; it grows from making something out of what we have.

And yet, like all families, Le Court has its periods of tension. As an enlarged family with many personal relationships it is perhaps particularly vulnerable to the perplexities arising from the problem of freedom. The following are a few random reflections that have occurred to me as a result of my knowledge of Le Court, and by the article 'How much Freedom? - That's the Problem' in a previous number of the 'Cheshire Smile'. They are, of course, purely personal and in no way intended as criticism - I would not presume to criticise.

Today most families are free of the coercion, nullity and hypocrisy of the Victorian family. Most are like Le Court, externally self-governing, - free of the unquestioned dictates of an authoritarian head, - attempting to synthesize the requests of each member of the family. In families, however, freedom is a mixed blessing. It needs greater self-awareness and greater co-operation, if unbridled egoism and loneliness are not to result. The rewards of being a

member of such families are high in terms of personal development and communal happiness, but the demands it makes on each member are proportionate.

The author of the article 'How much Freedom' suggested that an application of the principles of child psychology might be helpful for Le Court. This almost sounds like a counsel of despair! Le Court is a family of adults, and to apply the principles of child-handling would be to ignore the members adulthood and to lower our expectations from them.

The child lives to a large extent in a self-centred world. The adult has progressed beyond this and can appreciate that "there is no life that is not in community."

The adult can anchor his life to something beyond himself. The principles of child psychology are in essence paternalistic and take no account of the characteristic of adulthood. Would it not be more appropriate for Le Court to continue along its present democratic path and thereby use to the full the potentialities of its members? The principles of child psychology do not permit this.

In all groups that function harmoniously there is some awareness by the members of the rights and duties which are conditions of that harmony. Every member stands in a double relation to it - he has his share in it (he has "rights"), but also he has to contribute to it (he has "duties"). A contented communal life will depend upon these rights and duties, for they form a body of restraints. For a happy family life to be enjoyed by all it must impose some restraint on all. In practical terms, this means that no individual can ignore the fact that he is a member of a group. His freedom can never be absolute, it is always conditioned by the equal claim of other members.

These, I believe, are the principles implicit in relations between staff and patients of Le Court. I have presumed to make them explicit because I feel as an outsider I can draw your attention to the fact that already Le Court has within itself the means of solving its problem of freedom. It is too mature to need resort to the principles of child psychology.

Mary Potts.

ADVENTURESOME LIVING

In our last issue we promised to give our readers news of a group of handicapped people and their friends in Connecticut, U.S.A., who have come together "to build their own home, family and community where they can plant their roots, grow, and discover the abundance and goodness of life." They have formed a non-profit corporation called "New Horizons, a Fellowship Dedicated to Adventuresome Living by the Physically Handicapped". Through this organisation they plan to raise sufficient sums of money to establish a suitable family-home-community for themselves, their friends and posterity.

As we in the Cheshire Homes know, there are two different ways of establishing a Home. You can either purchase and renovate an existing building and estate, or you can design and build completely new homes from scratch. Our American friends in "New Horizons" are still discussing the pros and cons of these two different approaches.

Joan Herman, one of the founders and perhaps the chief inspirer of the scheme, has sent us some details of the ideal they hope to achieve. She presents a dream-picture of a home set in a farm estate where all the wholesomeness of country living can be realised, yet within easy distance of an urban centre.

There is a central building where the handicapped folk live, while the size of the estate makes it possible for families, friends and sympathisers to construct their own homes around this community centre. And so, a real community with social contacts and activities is close to those whose handicaps would otherwise isolate them.

In Joan Herman's dream-vision she sees the main entrance of the central building leading into a hall at once friendly and bespeaking home, with gay curtains and walls, upholstered furniture and paintings done by members of the family. (How like Le Court!) To the left, she goes on, are offices, suited to those who are working from their wheel-chairs. The young man busy at the switch-board is in a wheel-chair, and one of the young women typing has crutches beside her chair. Next to the offices is a small shop, or store. A blind girl behind the counter is selling cigarettes and stationery to a man on a stretcher.

Her dream takes her to the bright dining room where, later on, all the community are enjoying their noonday meal

together. It is hard to distinguish the nurses, aides, therapists and volunteers from their friends who are handicapped, as no one is wearing a uniform. The tables are a practical height for wheel-chairs to roll close to.

Then we are taken into one of the family units. (The home has four of these, each with 12 handicapped men and women). There are various sized bedrooms, each one furnished differently, according to the tastes of those who live in them. There are living rooms described in great detail. And to the rear of the building is a chapel ("the organist is in a wheel-chair"), a recreation room and a workshop ("they have a factory contract to fill before the week-end").

Well, that is the dream. I wish we had sufficient space to print the long article that Joan Herman sent. We here at Le Court desire to show a friendly interest and sympathy in the pioneering of an experiment in many ways similar to our own. Let us hope the dream will become an actual fact. We shall be keeping in touch with New Horizons, Inc.

Frank Spath

THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION
by DONALD CAMPBELL

(A patient at Le Court, who served for a year in the Legion, gives us below some of his reminiscences).

Many people have written about the famous Foreign Legion; most of them being more than a little inaccurate. If anyone wants to obtain an impression of what it is (or was) really like I suggest he begs, borrows or steals a copy of a little book by a gentleman who lives in Winchester. His name is Martin Aultine, and the title of the book, "My Life in the Legion". The late Major Stewart-Stephens also wrote a number of very interesting short stories about life in the Legion that was. In those days, the legionaries were paid at the rate of one ha'penny a day. Today, however, they are paid (according to what I have heard) a fair wage. I sometimes wonder how drunk the old "sweats" get with the additional money.

The average legionary was a professional soldier who did not fit into civilian life. There was little or no giving of commissions, the soldier had to prove himself by at least six months service at the front, which was fair enough. There are a few adventurers in the real sense of the word, men who have "blotted their copy-book", although they have satisfied the French

authorities they are not wanted criminals. Real criminals are not wanted in the Legion. They are sent to the "bataillon d'Afrique", or, if they have offended too gravely against military law, they disappear among the ranks of the "compagnies de discipline", where I would not wish my worst enemy.

At the beginning of the first world war, the French government formed what were called "regiments de marche", the backbone of which were old legionaries and regular army officers: recruits were enlisted just "for the duration".

It was not easy to enlist in the Legion in wartime. A Scots-Irishman, who was attached to the famous - or infamous - Second Bureau of the French War Office, and a certain lieutenant-colonel at H.M. War Office were responsible for my joining. I threw up my work on a newspaper near Fleet Street (I was only 27 at the time); the proprietor called me a ----- fool, but he gave me £10 as a present - a lot of money in those days. I travelled over to Paris, then to St. Germain-en-Laye where my sister lived: it was my permanent home, though I was hardly ever there. My Mother was aghast when I told her my plans. "The Legion", she cried, "all the neighbours will think you've committed some crime or other."

Almost immediately I arrived I was notified that a "certificate de bon vie et moeurs" from the local police would be needed. So I wended my way to the main police station, wondering what the guardians of the Law could know about me. I was very surprised to learn they knew a great deal. A charming and well-dressed "commissaire speciale" received me, related much of my history that I had hoped would remain secret, shrugged his shoulders in pity, and signed all the necessary papers.

Next day, in a branch of the War Ministry, I was given a very searching medical examination. I passed it, especially when I told the military doctors I knew how to use a rifle. Previous military knowledge always helps a lot, even if it be only that of volunteers and Dominion militia, which was all I could lay claim to.

They sent me, under the escort of a peculiarly silent sergeant, to another branch of the War Ministry. There I met a full-blown colonel who spoke to me as man to man, and told me what and what not to do. I always remember his final advice: "Never, never raise a hand to a superior. Don't give him any excuse, even if he subjects you to a flood of abuse, quite unjustly. Stand to attention and keep in mind that hard words never broke any bones." He said he was telling me this because Anglo-Saxons are so apt to engage in fisticuffs on the least

provocation. "Excuse me, mon colonel" I interrupted in a dulcet tone, "I'm not an Anglo-Saxon: I'm a Celt." He apologised, "I should have known better: all the same, you Scots are pretty wild types."

I reported that night at the barracks where I had been sent. But the sentry said I need not have come so soon. "There's a wine-shop opposite where they sell a good drop of pinard. The patron is not out to overcharge you." Well, I was panting for a drink, so I hied me across to the place, where the patron, an amiable giant, sold me a litre of strong but very good red wine. He told me of his experiences in the Franco-Prussian war. "Keep your eyes open for the 105th Infantry; they are a good crowd and very hospitable." Funnily enough I was to meet this regiment near the Somme three months later.

Afterwards, I reported to the sergeant-major of the guard at the barracks. A runner escorted me to the appropriate barrack-room across the drill-square in a building that must have dated from the 17th century. I was received by some very good fellows who showed me how to put my uniform on. They taught me how to load my magazine rifle and how to use the long thin bayonet. The uniform is worth description. There was a dark blue kepi, or field service cap, dark blue trousers, a semi-overcoat, but no tunic, and a regimental cummerbund (vulgarly called a "belly-go-round") which is a distinctive sign of the Legion. Also issued was a set of thick underwear, two pairs of stout boots, a water bottle, a knapsack, and a haversack. One soon learns the unwritten rules, e.g. don't forget to save some of your daily issue of a loaf of bread till the next morning, or you will have no breakfast except a cup of strong black coffee.

My company officer had come from the Second Bureau, and spoke very grammatical English with a sibilant French accent. An ability to speak several languages is common in the Legion. But it is best to have a good knowledge of French and of French ways.

The training was light compared to the peace-time routine. Two-thirds of the men seemed to be officers of neutral countries who had been given leave to enlist "for the duration" and see what they could see. The firing or shooting test was not difficult for me as I had been taught to shoot with a .22 at the age of 10.

Soon, we entrained for the front and were played away by a French infantry band to the tune of "Le Chant de Depart", not as you might think to the martial music of "La Marseillaise." After a very disagreeable journey, we arrived at a small station near the Somme front, and detrained for a long march to the front itself.

At the railhead, we were issued with overalls and a cap-cover of a neutral blue. Then we marched off to the front-line trenches and fought as several million other men fought during the war. I don't intend to describe the fighting here. Others, much more able than I, have already done so. You may have been there yourself.

What I would like to impress on you are the very interesting characters one meets in the Legion. They would make the fortune of any novelist. May I cite a few?

The first who come to mind is Joe Sukuna of Fiji, whose grandfather was one of the three kings who asked the British to take over the island last century. He was a fine athlete, and had been to public school and to Oxford. I often heard him tell how his grandfather had been a cannibal and he wanted to make up for it, so he had become a Christian, a High Anglican. I met him again many years later quite unexpectedly in Fleet Street.

Then there was Henry Farnsworth, who came over in his own yacht to join the Legion. He had already adventured a lot and once actually held a commission in the Turkish army. I was honoured to be mentioned in a book he wrote about the Legion at war.

Next, I remember a rather silent Englishman, obviously an officer from the British army. After serving with the Legion for some time he returned to British service, with increased rank, arrears of pay and, I believe, a decoration or two.

Then there was d'Equiroz, most pleasant and well-mannered of Spaniards, whose family motto was "Next to God, d'Equiroz". He was always cheerfully penniless: his grandmother, the Marquesa, held the family purse-strings. She asked me to tea once, but I - well, frankly I funk'd meeting a Spanish Marquesa of the old regime, I, a mere legionnaire of the second class.

Sampa Toule, a wild West African, enlisted in the Legion by mistake: he drove a taxi in Paris after the war. There was also a gentle-mannered Chinese who made a living as a photographer in the Fiji Islands. These are just a few of the interesting people I met in the 2/2 regiment of the Foreign Legion.

And now to bring my story to a close. In June 1915, I was discharged, and joined the B.E.F. at Cinder City camp, Le Havre, in the ranks of the Royal Fusiliers. Later, I was transferred to a military mission in a foreign country. And then I was again moved, this time into the Royal Engineers, canal and waterways branch, whose headquarters are at Longnoor. Yet I never saw Longnoor till the other day, for now I live only three miles away at Le Court.

WEST COUNTRY BALLET LTD.

I had the pleasure of coming to Le Court last summer with a group of Scottish Country Dancers. During the visit I met Mr. Frank Spath and in the course of conversation told him about a small group of professional dancers, called "West Country Ballet", of which I am the Director. He seemed very interested and suggested that I might write a short article for "The Cheshire Smile", giving some details of our aims and work.

This Company has been formed with a definite and original policy, which is, to produce new works of wide appeal, drawing for inspiration on British Tradition in music, literature, folklore, dancing and everyday life. We are trying to provide a bridge between the folk-dance enthusiast and the devotee of strictly Classical Ballet by blending the two dance forms and thus creating a new means of theatrical expression.

To many people the name "West Country Ballet" implies a Company which operates solely in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and has both a 'rustic' atmosphere and standard, which is far from the truth. My own home is in Somerset and I hope eventually to be able to establish a school there, where we would be able to develop our own style of work more fully. We take our traditions from all over the British Isles but are principally concerned with the Celtic peoples on the Western coasts; hence the name. It is true that we have performed in some 'off the beaten track' places, which is as it should be, but we also danced during the Edinburgh Festival 1955, and have given performances in London. All the major critics have seen our work and we have received considerable encouragement.

Our own traditional dancing has, for a very long time, been badly neglected by the British Theatre. As our dances are very popular overseas it would seem to be yet another case of a prophet having no honour in his own country. The trouble is that most people in this Country find their own National dances boring this is almost always because they are usually performed by amateurs and are not presented with any degree of theatrical effect. Amateurs, of course, dance the social dances for pleasure, which is quite right and various societies have done very good work in preserving popularising these dances. My quarrel with the amateur comes when he attempts to do the more specialised solo dances and reduces them to mediocre shufflings. This is what gets British dancing a bad name.

In our ballets we try to show some of the British solo dances performed, as they should be, with a high degree of skill and virtuosity.

For instance, in "Black-Eyed Susan" which is based on the old Drury Lane nautical melodrama, we use as a highlight of the ballet, an authentic version of the Sailor's Hornpipe. This version is unknown outside Scotland, where, funnily enough it is danced at the Highland Games, in full sailor's kit. How on earth it got there, nobody knows! We make no 'theatrical' additions to this dance at all, yet it always receives a tremendous reception, even from the most 'sophisticated' audiences. The lively music for this ballet, which was specially composed by Alec Rowley, makes full use of traditional sea shanties and songs, this combined with the colourful costumes of the 'press gang' era and the lively dancing, help to make the ballet a favourite with audiences.

"The Selchie", the most successful of our ballets, is set in the Western Isles and is based on one of the many strange seal legends current in that part of Scotland. Here again, the music is derived from traditional airs, cleverly used by Michael Hobson and also, of course, we use the bagpipes. To combine the Highland pipes with any other form of music raises several problems one being that the pipes have a unique scale which sounds 'flat' to an unaccustomed ear but we were able to find an effective solution. An unintentionally amusing moment in this ballet comes at the beginning of the second scene when the curtain goes up on a darkened stage showing the 'selchie' or seal-woman lying, in her sealskin, on the beach. A sort of sibilant murmur rises from the audience which sounds something like this itssasseal itssasseal ! This can really sound very funny when heard from the other side of the curtain. Of course traditional Scottish and Highland dancing play an important part in the ballet and although dancing in front of some very knowledgeable audiences when in Edinburgh, we came through with flying colours.

Our plans for the future include ballets based variously on a newspaper report from Ireland, a short story by Thomas Hardy and a group of medieaval stone carvings from Wells Cathedral..... quite a mixed collection!

Having very little money to spend we decided to mount our ballets with very simple scenery and to concentrate, instead, on lighting. This policy, although dictated by poverty, has produced some very effective results.

But as usual with small groups, money, or the lack of it, is a very big problem. For the next four or five months the Company will be disbanded while I work like a beaver to raise enough for a Spring tour. Raising money is one of the nastier

jobs enjoyed by the Director, it is also the most depressing! However being an optimist by nature, (an essential quality) I shall go ahead with our plans for the coming year. I have always been convinced that if one plods along determinedly enough, a path will be found. After all, as with everything else worthwhile, the way is never easy.

Frances Crossley.

WARDOUR CASTLE

Wardour Castle was closed as a Cheshire Home on January 1st and its remaining patients were taken into other Homes. Of the last remaining, Sam Holmwood, went back to his early home at Holy Cross; Ron Elms is now at St. Bridget's; Doris Garton has for the moment had to go into a private holiday home, but we hope shortly she will be back in a Cheshire Home; and Stan Moylan is now at Ampthill Park House.

The Trustees and the Honorary Warden, Colonel Irvine-Andrews, were most anxious to press on with the project, knowing as they did how keen G.C. was to keep it going.

Unfortunately, the physical difficulties were too great, the structure needed about £65,000 to make it safe; the Ministry of Works were ready to offer £40,000 towards this work if the Trust could undertake to raise the balance.

The Trustees felt that they could not undertake to subscribe to the work of restoration of this ancient building, especially as a further £10,000 - £15,000 would be needed to equip it as a Home.

And so reluctantly, the Trustees agreed with the local Committee and Colonel Andrews that Wardour Castle should be closed.

ST. CECILIA'S.

We are glad to report that the final plans for the 30 bed extension have been passed by the Council, and work will start on this towards the middle of March. It is hoped that the building will be sufficiently advanced for the foundation stone to be laid whilst the G.C. is still in England. We are hoping to make this a really memorable occasion and hope that some of the other Homes' representatives will be able to attend.

The Church of England Chapel was completed on time, and the Bishop of Rochester, Dr.Chavasse, officiated at the Dedication Service on January 19th. There were more than a hundred people at the Service, although due to the limited space many of them had to follow the Service from the garden. We were very glad to have Lord Justice and Lady Denning with us, as well as Miss Morris. The Mayor and Mayoress of Bromley, who are taking an increasing interest in the Home, also came, and with most of the other guests stayed on for tea and spent an hour talking to the patients and staff afterwards.

Our new Sister-in-Charge, Sister Pelzer, joined us on the 1st January, and has already gained the affection of the patients. She has started to make friends with other homes in the area, and has given us much valuable help and advice over the new extension.

Danny Callaghan, who has been with us for eighteen months, and who has helped so much at the Home, is, we are sorry to say, leaving us at the end of March to start his training to become a fully qualified male nurse.

We held a dance on the 8th February which was the first of many events planned for the coming year, to help raise funds for the new extension. About a hundred people attended the dance, and we were very fortunate to obtain the services free of two entertainers from the Windmill Theatre.

We are very glad to welcome on to our Management Committee Mr.H.Thorp, who has for a long time taken a great interest in the patients and in the Home.

The Welfare Committee continue in their wonderful work for the patients. Recently Mrs.Haddon, of Bickley, and Mr. Murray, of Chislehurst, have joined this Committee.

THE RUSTAMJI PATEL CHESHIRE HOME
Patel Farm, Sanda Naga, Jamshedpur, Bihar.

We have just received a letter from Diana Carlile about this new childrens home three hundred miles west of Calcutta.

It is in a delightful 35 acre estate which was donated by a local citizen, Mrs. Rustamji Patel, to the Jesuit Mission. And with her permission the estate was passed to the Cheshire organisation. Group Captain Cheshire intends to establish his headquarters in India here.

The town of Jamshedpur is famous for being the centre of the Tata steel works. It is a progressive well-laid out town with a considerable European population employed in the various metal industries.

The only existing building on the estate is a white-washed two-roomed bungalow surrounded by a wide verandah. "In this we hope to house twelve handicapped children, providing education and other training for them. There are plans for a larger building in the near future, and then, of course, the number will be greatly increased."

"Elizabeth, the first child, is five years old. She is a tiny tot with a congenital spinal deformity. The first day here she was a little dubious of white faces, but when the caretaker explained it was due to the powder we put on she was quite reassured. I think she began following us around in the hope of watching the powdering process. Now she is quite happy and very much enjoys being exhibit No.1. and getting an endless flow of sweets and biscuits."

THE CHESHIRE HOMES

Since 1948 Group-Captain Cheshire, v.c., has dedicated his life to a Mission for the Relief of Suffering, physical and spiritual. Part of this Mission has been the founding and maintenance of Homes which provide physical relief for sick and helpless people, most of whom need secure and welcoming surroundings in which they can re-learn how to live useful and happy lives, and for whom the State does not as yet provide adequate facilities. The Homes, although necessarily well organised, are not institutions in the narrow sense. Those in the Homes are truly at home, as opposed to being in a home, and the communities are small enough for people to matter to one another and to the cause. Although Group-Captain Cheshire is a Roman Catholic, the Homes themselves are non-denominational bodies; but life in them is surely quickened by religion. They all have full facilities for the respective denominations.