

THE TOWNSWOMAN

YOUR LOCAL GUILD NEWSLETTER

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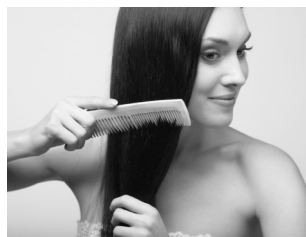
75TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

SINCE 1936

GUILD DRAMA FESTIVAL OPENS TO RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE

The bi-annual Townswomen's Guild Drama Festival opened on April 1st, a date not normally associated with serious happenings, but the Chatteris Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society wasn't fooling around with their production of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*. Set in modern-day Britain, the tale of star-crossed lovers was given an added twist by the use of a man to drag up and play Juliet's nurse. Guild Chairwoman Penny Gould explained: "We were short of a cast member, and we felt that the nurse was such a comical character that it wouldn't harm the

production if a man played the role. We asked Mr. Craven, our caretaker, handyman and gardener at Guild HQ, if he would be willing to take on the part, and luckily he said 'yes'." Mr. Craven said that he enjoyed playing the part, and would welcome further forays onto the stage.



Betty Lancaster as Juliet in the Chatteris Guild's production of *Romeo & Juliet*

The first round of the drama festival was well-attended, with Guild members Mrs Cook, Mrs Hunt and Mrs Gilbert providing refreshments. The winner was Littleport Townswomen's Guild, with their production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, a challenging play, which impressed the judges greatly. Littleport Guild Drama Society go through to the next round of the competition, the Area Finals, at the end of May. The winner of this round will go through to the National Finals in Welwyn Garden City in July.

Carol Savage

TOWNSWOMAN WINS JAM CONTRACT

Mrs Dabney, of the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild, has won a contract to supply the National Trust with her prize-winning preserves. Mrs Dabney has been making jams, marmalades and chutneys for over 40 years, and has won several awards within the Townswomen's Guild for both her preserves and her cakes.

Mrs Dabney's famous lemon meringue pie (pictured, left) is often to be seen as the star prize at Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild raffles.

Mrs Reece, of the Farndale Avenue Guild said, "we are all very proud of dear Mrs Dabney's success. I have always said that her jam was the best I have ever



Mrs Dabney's famous lemon meringue pie

tasted, and now I have been proved right."

Claire Walker

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GUILD NEWS BY MRS PHOEBE REECE (CHAIRWOMAN)

Well, what a start to the year! We have enjoyed some glorious weather which has encouraged us all to get out and about in the open air. The Guild outing to Kew Gardens in March was extremely interesting for those of us interested in horticulture, and provided an excellent day of exercise for those of us who are inordinately fond of Mrs Dabney's cake recipes.

Guild societies have offered some very interesting programmes for members, including the Knitting and Stitching Society's annual Knit-athon, which involved 73 ladies knitting for charity. The resulting items, which included several of

Mrs Bramley's loo roll covers, were auctioned on ebay and raised a grand total of £482.

The Guild Baby and Toddler Group, run by Mrs Parry-Jones, has gone from strength to strength, and we are delighted to welcome all the new mums to the ranks of the Townswomen. Congratulations also to Mrs Fisher on the birth of her twins, Jeremy and Jemima.

Older Guild members may recall the Coronation in 1952 and I am pleased to announce that next year for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Townswomen's Guild will be organising a street party

on Farndale Avenue in honour of Her Majesty. The committee will be chaired by Mrs Tyler, with Mrs Dabney in charge of catering. Do let me know if you wish to be involved in any way.

Future events in the Townswomen's Guild calendar include the visit to Hampton Court Palace on July 6th, the basket-weaving workshop on August 10th and Mrs Rollet's talk on "Raffia and its uses in pre-Republican Sri Lanka" on September 7th.

Don't forget the Nearly New Sale in aid of RNIB on Saturday June 4th from 10-3. Admission £1.50.

CHARITY NEWS - SPONSORED WALK

We were blessed with gorgeous weather for the start of the ladies' sponsored walk, which provided some much needed funds for the church roof appeal. All of the starters completed the 10 mile walk, with the exception of Mrs Battersby, whose Zimmer frame proved more of a handicap than she thought.

The route around Farndale Common proved a very scenic journey, taking in, among other local beauty spots, the Royal Wedding Commemorative Gardens, the children's play area and the duck pond (which is fast becoming a modern art gallery with its collection of shopping trolleys, bicycles and the occasional mattress). Fortunately there was no repeat of Thelma Greenwood's infamous dip two years ago as she was wearing rather more sensible shoes this time.

The planned route brought the added bonus of a stop-off at "The Dribbling Spout" tearooms for an Earl Grey and a sticky bun at about the halfway mark.



The Farndale Avenue duck pond

Edith Spott has really brought the place up a treat since taking it over last year. The interior design precisely mirrors that of her own home, giving a lovely intimate feel for those of us who are regular visitors to "Spottless" on Vine Terrace. Our visit also had the added advantage of allowing Mrs Battersby to rejoin us on her mobility scooter, the front basket of which proved a very handy place to keep excess buns for the

journey home.

The walk was educational as well, with Mrs Boggs providing a commentary on the interesting flora and fauna to be seen along the way. We even managed to inspire the local youths, with one young man proclaiming that he had seen some Great Tits, although unfortunately nobody in our party managed to catch sight of them.

Unfortunately the weather didn't quite hold out and we had to take refuge in the shelter near Barnley Road towards the end as the heavens opened, much to the dismay of the two young people whose romantic interlude we interrupted. However, we did all enjoy the chance for Mrs Battersby to regale us with tales of her own courtship in the same shelter 60 years ago.

All in all it was a very successful day, with £267.47 raised for the church.

Harriet Wetherby

RECIPE OF THE SEASON - SWEET & SAVOURY SCONES

Ingredients:

250g/8oz Self raising flour
Pinch salt
50g/2oz butter
1 egg
4 tbsp milk
50g/2oz sugar – for all scones except cheese

Optional (choose one):

50/2oz finely grated cheese
50g/2oz glace cherries halved
50g/2oz raisins/sultanas



Method:

1. Set oven at 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7
2. Grease a baking sheet
3. Sieve flour and salt
4. Rub in the butter
5. Stir in sugar if used
6. Add the optional ingredients now and mix thoroughly
7. Mix egg and milk and pour into the flour mixture
8. Mix with a knife to bring the dough together, use a little more milk if required
9. Roll out to 1½cm thick and cut out with a fluted cutter for sweet scones and plain cutter for plain scones
10. Bake 10 -12 mins on the top shelf or until golden

Excellent hot or cold served with butter

Variations:

Scones can be easily jazzed up by using a few simple variations. Here are some examples, but feel free to make up your own!

The cheese scones look special with a little extra finely grated cheese placed on the top before baking

Serve the sweet scones with clotted cream and jam as a summer treat

Instead of white flour wholemeal may be used either 100% or partly. This is particularly good for savoury scones

Kate Parry-Jones

Next time: even a novice cook can create wonderful preserves with Mrs Dabney's easy strawberry jam recipe

MISS FARNDALE AVENUE COMPETITION — CALL FOR ENTRIES

Applications are sought for the annual Miss Farndale Avenue competition. The winner will represent the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild at Society functions and receive the coveted Miss Farndale Avenue trophy.

The competition's previous illustrious winners have included Mrs Dabney, Mrs

Cartwright and Thelma Greenwood; the latter on several occasions.

If you would like to take part, simply collect an application form from your Guild Chairwoman, fill it in and return it by June 21st. Don't worry, you won't have to appear in a bikini!



Dawn Harding

*Perennial Miss Farndale Avenue,
Thelma Greenwood*

FARNDALE AVENUE HOUSING ESTATE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD DRAMATIC SOCIETY CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE WITH VARIETY PERFORMANCE

The Dramatic Society was formed in 1961 to cater for a growing need among ladies in the area who wanted to meet new friends and do some acting.

Since then, a wide variety of productions have been performed by the ladies, including *Cheeky Chops the Sausage Dog*, *Aida* and *The Romans in Britain*. Of particular note was the production of *Oklahoma!* in 1984, in which Thelma Greenwood (pictured) played the lead role of Laurey with skill and grace.

Thelma is currently reprising the role of Macbeth in the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's production of Shakespeare's great tragedy at this year's Townswomen's Guild Drama Festival.

To celebrate the Dramatic Society's Golden Jubilee, Thelma, along with other society members, staged a variety performance featuring excerpts from previous Guild productions.

Afterwards, Dramatic Society members partook of a buffet supper provided by Mrs Dabney.

At the close of proceedings, Thelma received the award for Leading Actress of the last 50 years. Other awards were won by Phoebe Reece, Hilda Bristow and the late Mrs Clarke (posthumously collected by her daughter, Rachel Jones).



Thelma Greenwood

Leading Actress of the last 50 years

Phoebe Reece

FILM

"MADE IN DAGENHAM"

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM IVORY, DIRECTED BY NIGEL COLE, CERT. 15

In 1968, the Ford factory in Dagenham was one of the largest single private employers in the United Kingdom. In addition to the thousands of male employees, 187 underpaid women machinists assemble the car seat upholstery in poor working conditions. Dissatisfied, the women, represented by shop steward Connie and loudmouth Rita O'Grady, work with union rep Albert Passingham for a better deal.

However, Rita learns that there is a larger issue in this dispute: women are paid an appalling fraction of the men's wages for the same work across the board on the sole basis of their sex. Refusing to tolerate this inequality any longer, O'Grady leads a strike by her fellow machinists for equal pay for equal work.

What follows tests the patience of all involved in a grinding labour and political struggle that ultimately advances the cause of women's rights around the world.

Sally Hawkins as Rita O'Grady is marvellous in this uplifting British film,

starring opposite Bob Hoskins as the union rep and Miranda Richardson as Labour Minister Barbara Castle. Richardson's performance as Castle retains the wry smile and raised eyebrow displayed in her portrayal of Queenie in *Blackadder II*, while Hoskins' Albert Passingham displays a respect for women which is lacking from the other male



Miranda Richardson

as Barbara Castle

characters in the film. Also making an appearance are Roger Lloyd-Pack, Geraldine James, Rupert Graves, Kenneth Cranham and the American actor Richard Schiff, famous for his portrayal of Toby Ziegler in *The West Wing*, now sporting a remarkable head of hair for the part of Robert Tooley. Rosamund Pike delivers a heartbreaking performance as the desperately unhappy university-educated wife of the factory manager, stating "I have a first-class degree in history and my husband treats me like a fool."

Without a doubt, this film should be seen by every woman, nay, every man, woman and child, to understand that it was not so long ago that women chanted "We want Respect" and "Equal Pay for Equal Work" and had the guts to stand up for what they believed in.

Felicity Cheshire

Made in Dagenham is available on DVD

GARDENING NOTES - FROM THE RHUBARB PATCH

The Townswomen's Guild's resident gardening expert offers some advice on how to ensure your garden stays productive over the coming months.

Now May is nearly out, we should be finished with the cold and clouts may be cast. Tender specimens from the frames should be planted in their final positions but do not be moving shrubs and bushes at this time of year.

Roses are budding up nicely and Glamis Castle is getting her pale cream buds ready but William Shakespeare is a bit slow donning the dark-blood flowers. The herbaceous border is well under way now and the first henbane and monkshood are giving a good crop this year.

Beware the worm that flies in the night bringing sickness and flies to the flowers: this is a sorry sight. Be vigilant and ward them off with cures and poisons.



Rosa Glamis Castle

Those determined souls who double dug or bastard trenched their plots now reap the reward of their endeavours. The carrots and beets will drive their roots deep into the loam and fill with earthy goodness. Keep an eye ready for the pests in the vegetable patch. Toads and slow worms are friends, devouring beetles, slugs and other crawling pests. Hedge pigs are to be encouraged.

Look into the timely seeds. You could be eating lettuce, cabbages, spring onions, spinach and radish had you but sown in time. The last of the stored root crop is now all but done; new produce is needed. It is too late for broad beans but not so for the last sowing of snap string beans.

Don't forget to plant with the moon. She is waning at present so planting parsley and leafy vegetables should be done. Beans and roots will not thrive too well so hold them back a week or two unless the weather is against you.

Harvest herbs for the cures and potions. They should be at their best but handle them with care; you don't want the vitals in them turned. Turn your compost heaps and fertilise the beds. Good mulches aid the full growth of plants, but jars for catching slugs and vermin are needed.

RWB

DO-IT-YOURSELF

Our regular do-it-yourself columnist is away, so we asked Henry Watson to offer some advice on how to paint your home.

First, prepare your room for decorating. Ensure that all valuables are carefully wrapped and put away and that dust sheets are used to cover furniture. Unplug all electrical devices and tidy the cables to avoid trip hazards.

Now prepare the surfaces you wish to decorate. Thoroughly clean the room by vacuuming away any dust and dirt to ensure a clean finish. If your walls are papered, remove the old wallpaper with a steamer. In all cases, wash the walls with sugar soap to prepare the surface. Fill in any old holes from wall fixings you no longer wish to use and sand off the excess filler. Use masking tape to cover wall fittings. Remove wall lamps if possible.

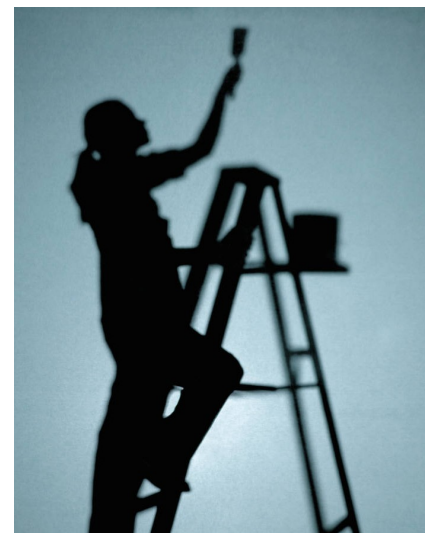
Once the walls are prepared, you may

start to decorate. Open windows to keep the room well ventilated. Use a small paintbrush to outline wall sockets and switches. Use a roller for the walls. It is best to use new roller heads as used ones may still contain traces of previous paint.

Remember: less is more when painting. Too much paint on a roller will cause slippage and unsightly drips. A second or even a third coat is recommended, to ensure even coverage.

Work methodically from left to right in small sections to avoid patchiness. However tempting it seems, do not paint at a jaunty angle. Straight up and down is best.

Ceilings can be tricky, especially those with a texture. You may have to go over some sections with a paintbrush on uneven surfaces. Leave to dry before starting another coat. This is a good



opportunity to sit down with a cup of tea and survey your handiwork.

Not only is painting your home yourself a very satisfying experience, it brings further rewards: no tradesmen messing up your home; the freedom that comes from doing the job when you want to; and the reduced costs and sense of achievement from being able to do it yourself.

Row 8: Using **A**, K to end.

Work these 8 rows 3 times, then work rows 1 to 4 once more. Break off yarn **B**.

Purl one row.

Knit one row.

Shape top

Row 1: * K4, K2tog; rpt to end (40 st)

Row 2 (and all even rows): K

Row 3: * K3, K2tog; rpt to end (32 st)

Row 5: * K2, K2tog; rpt to end (24 st)

Row 7: * K1, K2tog; rpt to end (16 st)

Row 9: * K2tog; rpt to end (8 st)

Break yarn and thread through remaining 8 st. Pull up tight and sew in ends.

Ruffle

Using **W** and double pointed needles, cast on 8 st and join in a round.

Row 1: K

Row 2: K, inc in every st (16 st)

Row 3: P

Row 4: K, inc in every st (32 st)

Row 5: P

Row 6: * yfwd, K1; rpt to end (64 st)

Row 7: P

Row 8: * yfwd, K1; rpt to end (128 st)

Row 9: P

Row 10: * yfwd, K1; rpt to end (256 st)

Row 11: P

Row 12: * yfwd, K2tog (256 st)

Cast off.

Malcolm We will perform in measure, time, and place.

Macduff Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings.

Crown

Using **M** and crochet hook, work 24 ch and join in a circle. Work 4 rounds in dc.

Round 5: * 6 ch, sc in 3rd dc; 8 times.

Round 6: sc in each of next 3 ch, * 6 ch, sc into 3rd ch from hook, 3 ch, sc in middle of next 6 ch loop; rpt to end of round.

Fasten off.

Finishing

Carefully pin the ruffle on top of the main part of the coverlet. Arrange the folds of the ruffle, making 16 'waves'. Stitch into place, securing the bottom edge of each wave so that they are evenly spaced. Stitch the crown into the middle of the ruffle.

HISTORY GROUP - BRONZE AGE ARCHAEOLOGY AT WYCHERT

The Townswomen's Guild history group recently heard a very enjoyable talk from the renowned archaeologist and Bronze Age expert, Dr A. Dickson, who discussed the finding of several interesting artefacts in the local area.

"On Friday 1st April 2011, Mr David Toggle, an amateur metal detector enthusiast from Ely, was detecting on farmland near Wychert. This was the first time that Mr Toggle, or indeed anyone, had had permission to detect on this particular field, and so the prospects of finding something of interest were good. Mr Toggle (generally known as 'Dave' to some of his metal detecting acquaintances) was not to be disappointed; as the light was fading he recovered a length of copper alloy blade, and then, about 12m away, a large socketed axehead, also of copper alloy. Knowing something of antiquities, he realised both as being of Bronze Age date.

Realising that the blade and axehead might be part of a larger hoard, Mr Toggle telephoned the author, as the leading authority on all things archaeological in the vicinity. Upon arriving at the site with the farmer, Mr Oldfield, the positions of the two finds were located and marked, and a sweep of the area was made by metal detector. Further signals were immediately noted, and these were plotted and then dug. This resulted in the finding of a further eleven Bronze Age artefacts, consisting of four socketed axeheads, four lengths of double-edged blade, two 'ingots' of unworked metal and part of one sword or dagger handle. All the objects were of copper alloy.

It is a popular misconception of the layman that such finds are made of 'bronze'. Whilst it may be the case that 99% of them are in fact made of bronze, scientific

analysis has revealed that some are not, technically, 'bronze', due to different proportions of the metals making up the alloy. The educated archaeologist has thus long since learned to refer to all such finds as being made of 'copper alloy'. As well as being technically correct in all cases, by dint of being less specific, use of the term 'copper alloy' also has the benefit of distinguishing the up-to-date archaeological thinker from the wider populace, some of whom unfortunately think they know rather more than they do of 'times past'.



Dr Dickson's interesting discoveries

But I digress. All the artefacts were incomplete, the axeheads having either the end of the blade or the end of the socket broken off in antiquity. The regularity of the breaks, combined with the presence of the ingots, suggested a smith's (founder's) hoard of scrap metal. The finds were collected by the author and delivered to the British Museum the following day, where it was confirmed that this hoard represented potential Treasure under the terms of the Treasure Act 1996 and its revision of 2002.

Subsequent finds necessitated an excavation, which took place on the weekend of 23rd to 24th April, and was led by the author, ably assisted by volunteers drawn from the Wychert Local History Society and Wychert Women's Institute (the membership of said august bodies being, with the

exception of the author, virtually synonymous). Also present were Mr Toggle, his fellow detecting enthusiast known only as 'Big Ron', Miss Liz Smith from the local newspaper, and Mrs Freakes, Chair of the Archaeological Society from the neighbouring parish of Neva Hadem (the latter having evidently got to hear of the impending fieldwork and, as ever, not allowed the lack of an invitation to prevent her attendance).

No further Bronze Age artefacts were found until about 3pm on

A total of thirty five late Bronze Age metal artefacts have now been recovered from the site, comprising twelve axeheads or parts of axeheads, six lengths of blade, two spearheads, two sword/dagger handles and thirteen ingots. The finds are comparable to others found in the vicinity over the years and fall within the Carp's Tongue Complex industry, which dates to the very end of the Bronze Age, circa 920-800 BC. Mrs Freakes' suggestion, published by her in this month's parish newsletter, that in fact the whole assemblage had most likely been lovingly kept for some 800 years or so and then been hurriedly buried to conceal it from the advance of the Roman Legions can be readily dismissed as the imaginings of a mind long since obsessed with all things 'Celtic' and 'Roman'.

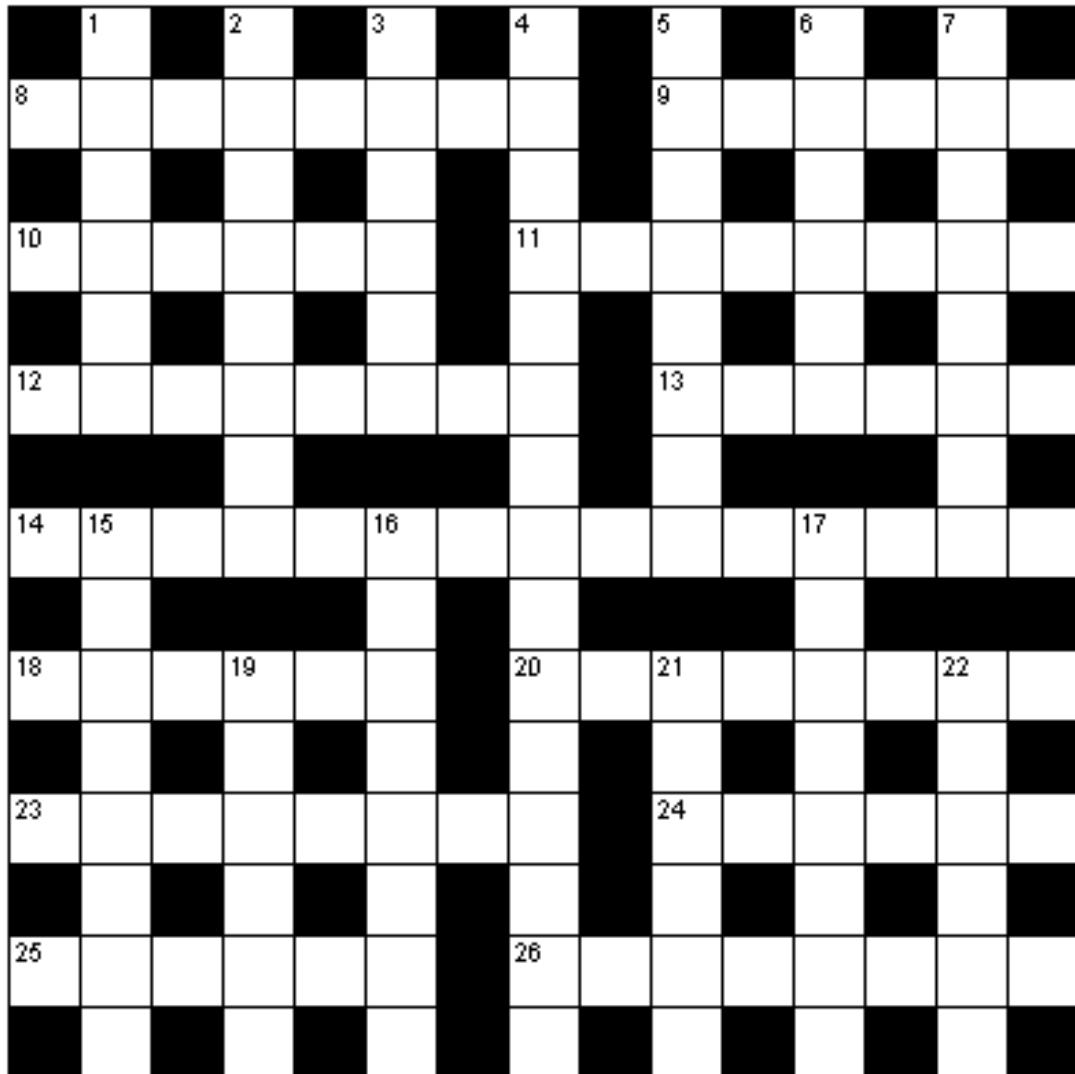
But I digress again. It is hoped that further fieldwork on the site will be carried out in the near future, and it is expected that the finds will eventually be acquired by Wychert Museum under the Treasure Act.

The credit for the discovery of this important find lies with Mr Toggle, whose decision to call for archaeological assistance after making the initial finds allowed the recovery of the in situ material, and the accurate plotting of all the find spots. This was a text-book example of the benefits to be gained by all from co-operation between metal detectorists and archaeologists. The excavation was also an exemplary piece of community archaeology, with individuals from several different groups giving up their time and working together for the benefit of our local heritage."

Dr A Dickson,

BA (Hons), MPhil, PhD

CROSSWORD

**Across**

- 8 A close and intimate union
 9 Italian brandy
 10 Struck with fear or dread
 11 Individual speech or language
 12 Sprayed
 13 Happens
 14 Finally practices Sarah's lesser red
 18 To some extent
 20 Evolution of organisms best adapted to the environment
 23 Benedick's sparring partner
 24 Manservant
 25 Taken without consent
 26 Formally registered as a member

Down

- 1 Pantomime villain
 2 Religious houses
 3 Common people
 4 Designed and carried out secretly
 5 Roman governor of Britain
 6 Celtic language
 7 Characteristic of a phantom
 15 Especially fine or decorative clothing
 16 Troublemakers
 17 Moving suspiciously
 19 Residue of partially burnt pipe tobacco
 21 Regenerated
 22 Missing links

PET'S CORNER - SYRIAN HAMSTERS

My name is Emily, and I have a hamster, and she is called Flora. Flora is fluffy. We let her run around in a big ball every day but she is not allowed to run around without the ball because she climbed all the way up the curtains once and then got scared and chewed through them and Mummy called her a bad word.

Flora lives in a big house with lots of colours in the living room so that Daddy cannot hear her running at night

because she runs a lot at night and sleeps during the day.

She also eats during the night because we put some food in her house every night before we go to bed and in the morning it is gone. Sometimes we see her carrying her food to her bed which is made of fluff. She puts all of her food in her mouth at once, which is alright for hamsters but which Mummy says I shouldn't do. When Flora does it her head grows REALLY big like Daddy's nose did when he was

stung by a wasp.

We have to clean out Flora's house every week because she poos a lot and she poos in her bed which is really yucky. When we clean her out we put her in a box because we clean her out in the day when she normally sleeps but I have to be really careful putting her back in her house because of the time when Daddy tried to pick her up when she was sleeping and she bit him and he said a bad word.



Flora the Syrian Hamster

And that is how I take care of my hamster Flora who I love.

Emily Dabney, age 6.

TRAVELS IN MOROCCO - PART II

After a vibrant and magical exploration of Marrakech, we set out towards the distant snowy peaks of the High Atlas Mountains for the second stage of our adventure which would enable us to experience the mountains and meet their wonderful Berber people. Our driver, Ishmael, was also our guide and spoke five languages - Arabic, Berber, French, English and Spanish! He talked of how important family is to Berbers and their great love of children.

As we journeyed higher, amidst spectacular views, our first stop was to a saffron farm dedicated to the harvesting of the three red stigmas found in the crocus flower. We then visited a Berber home sculpted in mud and had beautiful mint tea served to us - the most delicious of the whole trip.

We went on to see the Women's Argan Oil Co-operative. How anyone ever

worked out that this oil is so good and the method by which it's obtained, I really don't know. The oil is obtained from the fruit of the Argan tree, which is retrieved from the dung of goats, then cleaned and processed by the co-operative. Roasted Argan oil is used for dipping bread, on couscous and in salads, while unroasted oil is used as a treatment for skin diseases and in cosmetics.

All Argan sold today is produced by the women's cooperative, sharing the profits among the local women of the Berber tribe. They have established an ecosystem re-forestation project so that the supply of Argan oil will not run out and neither will their income. The money is providing healthcare and education to the local women, and supporting the entire community. Argan oil remains one of the rarest oils in the world due to the small and very specific growing areas.



We stayed at Kasbah du Toubkal, 40 miles from Marrakech

The final stage of our journey took us to Essaouira 'the windy city' on the Atlantic coast. Essaouira has been hotly contested over the centuries due to its strategic position on ancient trade routes and this can be seen in its architecture and culture. It was briefly Portuguese but latterly redesigned by the French during the protectorate years by the 'architect' of St Malo and thus has a strong Breton flavour. 'Essaouira' means 'well planned' in Arabic and the walled, compact medina certainly befits a rich coastal

trading port. It was famed also for the rare purple dye extracted from mollusc shells on islands just offshore and the purple/blue trademark colours can be seen everywhere contrasting with whitewashed walls.

Essaouira marked the end of our trip and we headed down the coast back to Agadir dreaming up plans for future travels but I suspect some may be back to Morocco.

Mr & Mrs Cleveland

CORRESPONDENCE

May I congratulate you on the marvellous knitting pattern published in the Autumn issue of *The Townswoman*. I am not an overly competent knitter, but I thoroughly enjoyed creating the tea cosy and have made several for friends and family. I may even join the Guild Knitting Group in future!

Mary Edwards

[Thank you for your letter. We have had many similar letters praising this knitting pattern. *Ed.*]

I feel it is important to bring to your attention the obvious error in your crossword published in the Autumn edition. As everyone knows, the capital of Thailand is not “Bangkok”, but “Krung Thep”. “Bangkok” has not been used in Thailand for many years and merely signifies a fishing village. “Krung Thep”

of course does not fit in the space allocated in the crossword for 7 down.

Thelma Greenwood

[We apologise for the mistake and have passed your concerns about the accuracy of our crossword onto the puzzle compiler. *Ed.*]

Thank you for publishing Mrs Carpenter’s enlightening account of her travels through South America. I particularly enjoyed the part where our heroine was kidnapped by drug barons but managed to talk her way out of captivity by sharing her knowledge of the mating habits of tree shrews. I look forward to reading more of Mrs Carpenter’s exploits in future issues of *The Townswoman*.

Caroline Flint

[Further adventures of Mrs Carpenter, including her visit to Nepal, will be published in September, when she is expected to return to the UK. *Ed.*]

Do you intend to publish any of the talks from our guest speakers at Guild meetings? I have missed some of them due to illness and it would be comforting to know that I can pick up a copy of *The Townswoman* and catch up with anything I have missed.

Joan Pleasance

[This issue we have great pleasure in publishing the abridged text from the History Group’s visiting speaker, Dr A Dickson, on Bronze Age Archaeology. We encourage Guild members to submit the scripts of their talks where possible and in future we will ask visiting speakers to bring the text of their talk with them for inclusion in the magazine. *Ed.*]

BEAUTY NEWS - FISH FEASTING ON FEET - UNSANITARY PRACTICE OR PERFECT PISCINE PEDICURE?



Garra Rufa fish, often called ‘Doctor Fish’, ‘Nibble Fish’ and ‘Little Dermatologists’ have long been a recognised therapy for a variety of skin conditions in Turkey. In recent years their popularity has taken off in China, Japan and Europe, with the tiny sucking fish becoming a must-have not only in health spas, but also in beauty salons which offer the best-ever pedicures courtesy of the hungry piscine skin-feeders.

Soft skin and perfect cuticles aside, fish therapy offers much needed relief to sufferers of painful and debilitating skin conditions such as Psoriasis and Eczema

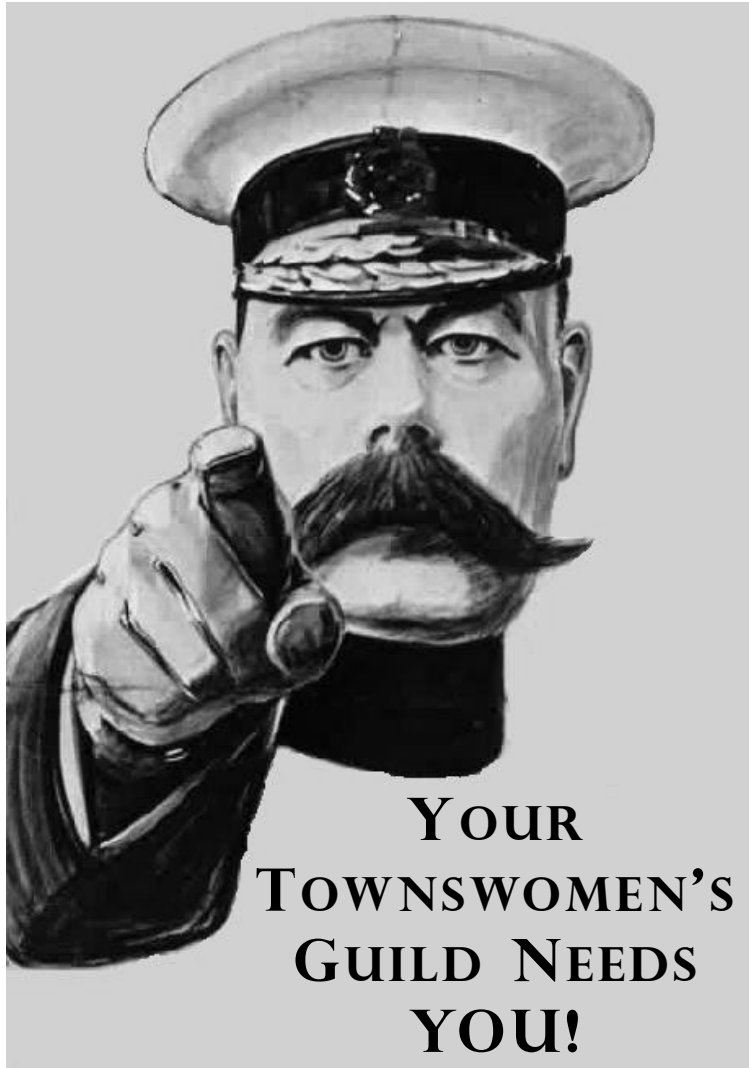
(it has been claimed the fish secrete an enzyme which can help eczema sufferers). It has been reported that although the treatment should only be viewed as a short-term treatment of symptoms, Doctor Fish can significantly improve the lives of many people. As the ravenous fish nibble their way through dead cells and psoriatic plaques, red, sore skin appears transformed: a healthy glow replacing the dull, scaly outer layer of dermis. Patients report not only vastly improved skin condition, but the psychological bonus of a feeling of well-being on being able to wear short-sleeved clothing again without fear of uncomfortable staring from those who are quizzically curious or just blatantly ignorant.

However, the treatment is not without its opponents, who claim that fish gorging on one person’s scabs and scales, then moving on to the next human foot-fest, is inviting cross-infection and transference of disease. Indeed, the use of Doctor Fish in Spas

has been banned in some American States following claims of unsanitary practice, albeit to background cries of ‘Nanny State’! There is also unease regarding the welfare of the fish, with some specialist fish-keepers voicing concern that in order for the fish to digest sufficient quantities of dead skin they have to be kept hungry; a claim vigorously denied by both long-time users in the original Turkish spas and by newer converts to the therapy.

The fast-growing trend for such ‘natural’ treatments will undoubtedly ensure that Doctor Fish Therapy remains the hot topic of discussion for the foreseeable future. We Brits certainly seem to have overcome our traditional squeamishness and embraced this new treatment; whether it can maintain its popularity without the added bonus of the hot Turkish sun and beautiful mountain views, only time will tell.

Mrs H. Butt, RN



WHY NOT SUBMIT A PIECE FOR *THE TOWNSWOMAN*?

The Townswoman is looking for contributors to future issues of the magazine. So if you have a poem, a gardening tip, or even a recipe to rival those provided by the indomitable Mrs Dabney, please get in touch via the Guild Chairwoman, Mrs Reece. And remember, all contributions relating to Guild activities are welcome. Why not write a report detailing the activities of a Guild society, or one of your personal interests? We love hearing about your exploits in foreign climes and the monthly guest speakers who entertain so many of us with their anecdotes. We regret we cannot include everybody's submissions, but we do read them all!

The Townswoman reserves the right to edit any copy submitted for publication. Copyright for all submissions remains with *The Townswoman* once published.

THE LAST WORD - POETRY

Spring is here
And all the little buds are peeping out
The cherry blossom waves from up above
The birds all tweet from trees and roofs
Their nests they're building strong
And all the children simply want to shout

Spring is here
The sky is blue, the clouds are soft and white
The air is warm and sunlight heats the earth
The lambs are leaping in the fields
The farmers sow their corn
And hats and gloves are banished from all sight

Felicity Cheshire

There was a young lady from Leeds
Whose hair was all covered in beads
When she went for a walk
People started to talk
And the birds thought her hairclips were seeds

Phoebe Reece

Oh, where has my lover gone?
I swoon with desire at the thought of his name!
He left me with no warning
No note did I find -
I bet he's gone off with that woman round the corner who
works at the paper shop, the little hussy!

Hilda Bristow