



# Insight



Leavesden and  
Abbots Langley  
Hospitals  
Magazine

I N S I G H T

N O V E M B E R 1 9 7 5

EDITOR	W. D. ROBINSON
CO-EDITOR	C. SPANSWICK
TYPED BY	P. M. ALLEN
DUPLICATED BY	B. DUNPHY
COLLATED BY	MRS. SUTTON, STAFF AND RESIDENTS OF SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

EDITORIAL

Bill Robinson

I recently had occasion to entertain a German economist friend and following the evening meal discussion ranged from world economics to Common-Market

policies. He hastened to assure me that Great Britain's problems arose from lack of productivity, quoting that Germany produced twice as much per man (this does not mean worked twice as hard) compared with the British work force. He was also of the opinion that in our efforts to achieve a more equal society, we were not only making the rich poorer, but we were also dropping the living standards of everyone in general. After giving a good deal of thought to his comments I asked him "What sort of a society would our children inherit if we all produced on the same scale as Germany, Japan and America?" His conclusions were similar to mine own, that we are travelling on a course which will lead to the diminution of the worlds' natural resources and as a consequence we will have polluted the oceans/rivers and atmosphere in the process.

So where do we go from here? I think as a Nation we will have to look very closely at ourselves and decide what we really want for our life style. Trying not to be retrogressive, I believe our society should be working towards a simpler, saner way of life. There is a general trend at the moment for a good many people to return to the land and the village way of life. A good many more would be pleased to opt out if they knew how or had the ability and determination to achieve a simpler way of life. I am aware that there have been similar trends in our short history since the Industrial Revolution, but we have reasons today that were never encountered by our forbearers.

Recently Mr. George Meany, President of the American AFL - CIO trade union organisation gave a warning that 20 million Americans could be unemployed sometime during 1976. We are also approaching the 1½ million mark in this country and the saddest part is the unemployment of the Nation's youth. It hardly seems creditable that we should have any unemployed at all when one considers the number of social projects that could be started instead of having a million and a half drawing social security.

A powerful argument can now be made for repopulating the British countryside. The homesteads, small holdings villages of what must be some of the most intoxicating countryside in the world, offer a good number of people a cure to the social malaise of this century. Many people have already realised this and are moving out in a steady slow stream, and finding somehow or another that they can scrape a living.

Anyone who moves countrywards will certainly gain a satisfactory social life. But how will they live and what could they eat? No one but a romantic is going to pretend that they are going to grow all the food they need, but if our society which is gradually becoming automated and computerised can offer an alternative on the other four days of the week, which will be free in the future, then we may ultimately achieve a much saner society.

A WORD OF PRAISE

Bill Robinson

Owing to pressure of work through the re-organisation of the Supplies Department, Audrey Hunter, who has been our typist since the beginning of new 'Insight' has found that she is no longer able to be that vital link in our magazine team. We managed to produce October's edition with the kind help of the medical records staff and it looks as if the situation will soon be resolved by our new typist, Pat Allen.

Many thanks, however, to Audrey for her many months of hard work and unbelievable, neat typing which was highly commended by the judges of the Kings Fund competition.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

J. Hickman  
S. Jones

Early this year the residents of Heather Ward obtained allotment 19 (annexe) with a view to growing vegetables for their own use as part of their training.

With the help of gifts of seed potatoes, beans, etc., and the hard work of the residents and staff a thriving allotment was established. We all looked forward to reaping the benefits but during the last week in August everything was stolen - potatoes and beetroot dug up and beans flattened. Needless to say the residents were very upset and cannot understand why anyone should deprive them of the fruits of their labour.

We hope that those people responsible for this despicable act now realise and regret the sadness they have caused our residents.

We would add that with toil and effort they too can have an allotment they can be as proud of as were our residents.

## THE PEGGY JAY COMMITTEE

K. R. Pugsley

As many of you will know, the Secretary of State for Social Services, Mrs. Barbara Castle, has set up a committee to look at the future of the mentally

handicapped, their nursing and care. Although, ostensibly, there appears to be proportional representation, it is after all a committee which is going to make fundamental proposals for both the care of the mentally handicapped and the future of the nursing profession. This being the case, one expected, but did not get, much greater nursing representation on this committee, and if one looks rather more carefully at the membership, it becomes obvious that there is a bias towards Social Services.

I have spent several months in Scandinavia looking at their models of care, both in organisational and practical terms, the working situation; how the service is manned and how it works. It is good, but not all good, rather like the saying 'good in parts' - where it is good is in the amount of money spent and the standard of services and facilities provided but my conclusion was that if we had the money, we could do a better job. That is a pretty uncontroversial statement. But what is controversial is that this committee's recommendations will profoundly affect mental handicap nursing and I ask you, how many professions would allow a committee on which they had a small representation, decide their future.

What is to be done? It is obvious that the committee hears from the nursing profession what it feels is necessary in the form of carefully thought out and prepared evidence. The Divisional Nursing Officers (Mental Handicap) and Senior Nurses in the Hertfordshire Area have already once, because of the widespread feelings which there are in the profession; and to try to avoid too many differing points of view being put forward to the committee, we are gathering together from as wide an area as possible, all Divisional Nursing Officers and Senior Nursing Officers to identify and agree on specific proposals to be put forward to the 'Jay Committee'. I cannot emphasise too strongly that the future is in the hands of this committee and we just cannot let recommendations be placed before the Secretary of State which do not reflect our united views. Indeed, if we are united enough, it may well concede our point of view, and this is our target: a proper service to be provided for the mentally handicapped by those who have the expertise.

Having said this, there is little point in denying the fact that there will have to be reappraisal of the role of the nurse because I think we must recognise that there is little in the "General Hospital" sense of nursing involved in the care of the mentally handicapped; the emphasis in Leavesden and other good hospitals must be on education, training and re-socialisation and we must accept also that the mentally handicapped are not ill - they are handicapped and this really is the crunch question. Do we plump for the security of the title 'nurse' and limit our role or do we consider what is necessary for the mentally handicapped, look at the objectives necessary to achieve this and design an organisational structure, training and career structure within it.

PETTICOAT LANE FAYRE

Victor H. Rands

The League of Friends of Abbots Langley Hospital held their annual Garden Fete on Saturday, 13th September 1975.

They adopted the Cockney theme this year and invited the Pearly King and Queen of the City of London, who arrived in company with the Pearly Queen of Hoxton, my own home district.

The day was blessed with sunshine and brought an estimated 300 visitors who were encouraged to part with their money on the numerous stalls, games of skill and various raffles, plus a completely new addition, a stall managed by the domestic team who were organised by Mrs. Croxford, our Domestic Manager. An estimated total of £400 was raised.

Credit must go to the usual few members of the League of Friends who put so much effort into their work for the hospital, so freely and so willingly. They need many more active supporters to assist with the work. All of us are getting older and youngsters are urgently needed to learn the techniques of organisation and the variety of skills that are required to make such an active and worthwhile League of Friends as we have who are ready to take over when the demands become too great.

We were pleased to welcome Mrs. M. Spark, our Divisional Nursing Officer, and her husband. I believe she was surprised at the activity on the field and I am convinced that she was thrilled at meeting the Royal Pearlies and learn a little of their history.

The Pearly King and two Queens offered their services completely free of charge. Unfortunately, due to a clerical error, they had a tour of Hertfordshire before reaching the hospital, including a visit to Barnet (the secretary's home), four visits to St. Albans and three visits to Watford, but all credit to their cockney stamina it was all laughed away and visitors on the field and patients in their beds were extremely amused at the Cockney humour and quick wit.

The fete involves the hospital administrators in a considerable degree of extra work, but this is accepted most willingly. It can help the League of Friends in the recruitment drive and it gives a little publicity to the existence of such an organisation.

There is also another credit spin-off - it involves the staff - therefore creating a renewed sense of purpose and an improved level of comradeship and unity. It also forms a pleasant meeting point for members of Management Committees, which enables them to meet staff and boost morale, meet members of the League of Friends and utter a small "thank you" for all the benefits they provide for the patients. Unfortunately the Management Committees no longer exist.

The proceeds of the fete will finance portable telephone trolleys for the patients.

My sincere thanks to all members of the League of Friends and members of the staff who gave their help.

LEAVESDEN AND ABBOTS  
 LANGLEY HOSPITALS  
 SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

D. Samuels

No doubt many members have noticed that alterations are now being made to the Club House and although no promise has been given, it is hoped that these alterations will be completed by Christmas.

Unfortunately, due to lack of capital, the original plans have had to be trimmed and therefore the final scheme will not be completed in detail. Some furniture and fittings have had to be either reduced in number or left until a later date. I am sure however, that this will in no way prevent a considerable improvement upon the existing facilities; for example the hall will contain its own bar and therefore, when dancing or other activities are in progress, members will have direct access to the main bar without undue congestion.

From discussions with many members it would appear that some are not fully aware of the full range of activities that are available; indeed some sections have unfortunately ceased to exist due to lack of support. I would ask that all Section Secretaries make use of the Hospital Journal 'Insight' in order to keep everyone informed of these activities. By doing so, club members who are interested in darts, badminton, tennis, football, fishing, athletics and many other sports will know who to contact and where.

Like most clubs, Leavesden and Abbots Langley Sports and Social Club receives its fair share of criticism. However, constructive criticism is most welcome, but unfortunately I have noticed that some members who feel that they have a complaint overlook the procedures they should take. It is necessary, in order that action can be taken, for them to write to Mr. R. G. Thompson, Hon. General Secretary, stating their case. He will, where possible, resolve the problem or place the matter before the Central Committee for the attention of its members. Some matters can only be resolved at the Annual General Meeting by the members themselves. Unfortunately, the attendance at the A.G.M. is very poor indeed; although membership of the club runs into many hundreds, actual attendance is only 35 - 40 members which is a sad state of affairs. It creates a situation whereby they are forced to make decisions affecting every member. It follows therefore that anyone who is dissatisfied must make it their duty to attend the A.G.M. for it is no good criticising decisions after the event.

Since being elected to the Central Committee I have often wondered whether members are aware of the amount of work which goes on behind the scenes. Hardly a week goes by without a meeting taking place, whether it be the Central Committee, Entertainments Committee or the various section committees; all meetings being held in the members own time. Your elected Officers, General Secretary, Treasurer and their assistants depend upon the co-operation of everyone concerned in order to carry out their duties, to your advantage.

Finally, it is necessary to bring to the attention of all members the need to prevent vandalism. In recent months toilet and light fittings have been broken and some items of furniture misused.

The Club is your club; money spent on replacement of fittings could have been used to provide additional, or improve existing, facilities.

Please do not forget the Annual General Meeting, which normally is held during January of each year. It is not possible to write to every member but notices will be displayed in the Club House and on Official Notice Boards in the Hospitals. Your support is essential.

REORGANISED  
SUPPLIES

Catherine Spanswick

John J. Lee was appointed Officer-in-charge of Supplies in the S.W. District in April this year.

Since then the Supplies Department at Leavesden and Watford have been involved in a full scale internal re-organisation.

Unlike most other departments Supplies is organised on an Area rather than a District basis. All Supplies and Stores staff are regarded as Area personnel, outposted to individual Districts to do their work but essentially carrying out an Area function: within the District itself an interchangeability of personnel is encouraged so that all staff become familiar with the workings of the whole department, not just one small section.

In our own District the "hub" of the Supplies Department is found at the King Street offices where all purchasing transactions now take place. The Supplies sections within the hospitals themselves no longer work as separate entities but each takes responsibility for the whole District for one group of goods. Leavesden, for example, will take charge of all textiles and patients clothing whereas the Peace Memorial will stock surgical dressings and medical supplies and the Shrodells stores will be responsible for hardware, crockery and stationery. Stock control for all areas will operate from Leavesden.

Since each hospital will requisition goods from the appropriate stores, when they are required, the hospital transport system has also been reviewed to give a more economic service. A van from Leavesden for example, will take certain material to Shrodells and on the return journey will carry hardware and stationery. The financial advantages of the new system will be found in the bulk buying and delivery of goods and it is hoped that savings will counter-balance the effects of inflation increases and contain the budget to this year's figure.

Mr. Lee has worked in Stores and Supplies for 38 years. He joined the Health Service in 1938 and was first at Edgware General and later at No. 5 central group at Shoreditch and Queen Elizabeths Hospital for children in Hackney. Even during his six years war service in the Royal Artillery and Black Watch he was made a quartermaster's sergeant!

He has been at Watford since 1956 when he was in charge of Stores control and purchasing for the Peace Memorial. It is very pleasing to him to see the implementation of a new and exciting system of supplies and he is convinced that it will bring not only efficiency to the service but much satisfaction to the staff of his department.

Mr. Lee lives with his wife in Harrow; he has two grown up children and one grandson who is to his grandad "the greatest stimulus to my life since the war!" His hobbies, (apart from spoiling the little boy), include reading autobiographies; music and gardening; he is also a football and boxing fan.



John J. Lee is District Supplies Officer for South - West Herts. He is based at Kings Street where under the recent reorganisation of the Supplies Department, the ordering of all goods is now carried out. Photo: F.Warn.

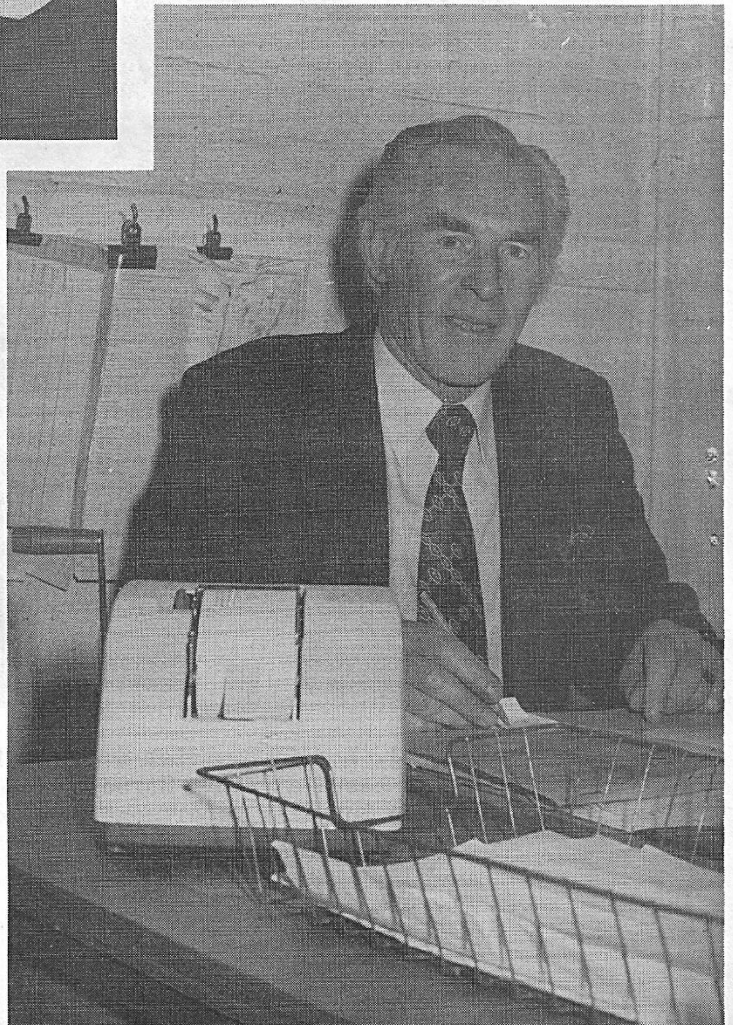




NEW FACES IN THE SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT

Left  
Bob Tugman is the newly appointed Senior Supplies Assistant for Leavesden and Abbots Langley.

He is by no means new to the hospital service, having worked for 13 years at Hill End and for 10 years at Harperbury.  
Photo: W.D. Robinson.



Another new recruit is James Reynolds who has taken over the management of the Main Stores after many years experience in industry.  
Photo W.D. Robinson.

Office for South - West  
under the recent reorganisation  
of all goods is now carried

BOB TUGMAN  
SENIOR SUPPLIES ASSISTANT

Bob Tugman, our new Senior Supplies Assistant, came to us on 22nd September, 1975 after

over 13 years at Hill End Hospital, St. Albans. His responsibilities there lay mainly in the Stores Department. Previous to this, Bob had served for 10 years at Harperbury Hospital, again mainly on Supplies work. He came into the Health Service from the regular Army (Royal Engineers), where he was first introduced to the supplies function towards the end of his service by being appointed officer-in-charge of R. E. Main Stores, Cairo.

His outside interests are numerous and leave him very little spare time - as an officer in the Royal Navy Reserve (!) he is presently First Lieutenant of the St. Albans Sea Cadet Corps; he is also a fanatic sailing type (as is his wife - lucky chap!) and they sail a 4½ ton sloop out of Brightlingsea, Essex, visiting Belgian and Dutch ports during summer holidays and sailing locally every weekend.

Bob tells us he is a keen photographer and also dabbles in Amateur Radio, building all his own gear for shortwave listening on the 'Ham' bands, exclusive to morse code operators. This activity is referred to by his wife as "Listening to his pips and squeaks".

Bob and his wife are among the elite few who never watch television but they are addicted to listening to classical music on hi-fi stereo when time permits.

JAMES REYNOLDS  
STORES MANAGER

James Reynolds, Stores Manager, is a recent recruit to the staff of the Supplies Department. He

is a local man, married with a 21 year old daughter, who has just completed a 3 year degree course at Middlesex Polytechnic.

Mr. Reynolds joined the Health Service after 28 years in industry, where he has held many senior positions in Stores Management and goods distribution. For 28 years he worked for 2 companies, Transformers Limited of Watford and Telcon Magnetic Cases in Apsley, where he was responsible for the efficient running of the Stores and Distribution centre. This included many duties such as maintaining stock levels, organising deliveries and answering customers' queries by 'phone and telex. Mr. Reynolds also took charge of shipping documentation and transport arrangements to docks and airports since 45% of the company's goods were sent for export. His extensive experiences have included buying and ordering as well as stock control and since his company supplied many of the Ministries with goods, he holds the Ministry of Technology Inspection Certificate.

His years at Apsley however, were brought to a premature end when the company decided to close its southern area branch, where he was by then Branch Manager. It was the end of this episode in his life which brought him to the Health Service and to Leavesden.

It is a complete change and different in many ways from what he did in the past but he hopes with the co-operation of all concerned, he will do his best to master his new position. So far he is enjoying his work here and finds all the staff very helpful and willing to lend a hand when required. He finds his new position very different and a challenge, but most rewarding.

Outside of work his interests include modern and old time dancing and fishing and fast driving, but during nice weather and the long evenings he and his wife Pat prefer a drive in the country to get away from town life and traffic congestions.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mr. E. C. Truett  
Committee member of the  
Friends of Leavesden

At a recent meeting of the Friends I was informed by the Home Counties North Region of the NSMCH that some enquiries had been received from parents who wish to make arrangements to

bequeath their house after their death so that their child could continue to live in it. In some instances they indicated their willingness to leave it to a Local Authority of Trust, to accommodate other Mentally Handicapped children, providing their child is allowed to remain in the house. If anyone knows of such arrangements having been made I should be very glad to have particulars (address: 3 Hastings Road, London, N11 2RJ, tel: 01 368 6091).

Attention was also drawn to the Personal Trust Scheme drawn up by the National Society for M.H.C. For some years the National Society had been asked by parents to help in managing funds or property bequeathed to their mentally handicapped son or daughter. Hitherto the difficulties had been too great, but now they have approved the Articles of Association for a "holding company" for individual trusts to be operated on behalf of a mentally handicapped person, to be known as "The National Trustees for the Mentally Handicapped". Anyone interested in this scheme should contact Mr. Alan Phillips, at the National Society - address: 17 Pembridge Square, London, W2 4EP, tel: 01 229 8941).

In 1963 the National Society introduced their Trusteeship Scheme whereby parents of a mentally handicapped person enter a contract with them to pay the sum of £500 or bequeath this sum to them. The National Society then appoint a person to be responsible for the well being of the son or daughter and pay regular visits upon the death of the parents. Owing to rising costs at all levels, it is now found necessary to increase the entry fee from 1st January, 1976 to £750, but contracts already agreed at £500 will be honoured. Again particulars can be obtained from Mr. Alan Phillips (as above).

HOLIDAYS I HAVE ENDURED  
Part 2

B. Offredy

Following our first somewhat disastrous efforts at 'camping' one might be justified in thinking that the family would not consider repeating the experience. Not a bit of it. To my amazement on our return my husband informed me that he proposed to purchase the tent, or what remained of it and, "now that we have learned from our mistakes, next year would be a very different kettle of fish".

I listened with increasing wonder as he recounted our experiences to our friends - could he possibly be describing the holiday from which we had so recently returned? According to him, apart from one or two minor incidences, due to our inexperience, it had been a couple of weeks of relaxed and trouble free enjoyment. Could his memory really be so short?

I began to feel somewhat guilty as some of our unsuspecting and non camping friends began to consider embarking on similar holidays themselves. I had not formerly thought of my husband as a jealous man, but could now only conclude that, as he had now lumbered us with at least one more of these ghastly endurance tests, he did not see why any of our acquaintances should enjoy the advantages of a package deal in some comfortable hotel.

The tent finally dried out. The borrowed equipment was returned with grateful assurances that we could not possibly have managed without it and the year wore on.

We had more endless discussions deep into the night during which we decided to obtain a kitchen extension for the tent, a lockable hard top camping trailer, a cooker with legs and a large assortment of equipment which we decided was essential. We also firmly agreed that we would stay in hotels en route and would not drive so late or so fast and would require three weeks instead of two, to allow for all this additional travelling time. We had heard of an excellent camp in Italy just outside Venice and determined to go there. A route was planned, boat booked and stores ordered. This time it was going to be different.

The boat which we had booked was a fairly late one. Our intention was to drive for about an hour and then find a hotel for the night before crossing into Belgium to get on to the Autoban through Germany the following day.

To my utter astonishment my husband had organised his work so well that he actually arrived home earlier than expected - a feat that he has never managed since, I might add. The consequence was that we caught a much earlier boat than we had intended and were already in Belgium when the agreed time for looking for a hotel came round.

The best laid plans of mice and men - when darkness fell, we found ourselves on a motorway; one which had no turnings off, no lay-bys and no Fortes restaurants with their convenient large car parks. We were forced to drive on and on until at about 2.30 a.m. my husband said he could drive no further and would have to have some sleep.

He pulled onto a sort of grass verge, very narrow and proceeded to go to sleep while I sat petrified as giant continental lorries, all hauling huge trailers, thundered past inches from my left ear, making the car rock crazily about. I felt that my last hour had come. It was with some relief that I saw the sky begin to grow light and at about 5.30 a.m. roused my sleeping spouse and suggested that we move on before we were thrown into some foreign jail for illegal parking.

We drove on, crossed the border and were well into Germany before we finally found a "park platz" at about 8 a.m. Exhausted, my husband got out a camp bed and stretched out while I, having had no sleep at all, struggled with camp stove and frying pan to produce breakfast for four on top of the trailer.

The children were quite refreshed and lively as they had slept soundly all night. My husband was not too bad. I felt terrible, nor did I have the chance to sleep that day. I was navigator and cook. Also, as we were driving on the wrong side of the road I had to be constantly looking in the wing mirror when my husband wished to overtake the vehicle in front, which he did continuously. All his good intentions about not driving fast had evaporated as soon as we left the house and our average speed was about 80 mph.

Under protest from the rest of the family it was just growing dusk when we began to look for a suitable hotel for the night. This may be a simple matter if you are travelling alone, but becomes much more difficult when there are four of you.

We were just getting back into the car after several unsuccessful attempts when a gentleman on a bicycle stopped beside us. He and his young daughter, out for a ride had noticed that we were having difficulty. He, like my husband, was a Rotarian and offered to help us to find a hotel. He had, he said, spent some time in London and had found the English so kind and helpful that he was anxious to do something in return - how about that then.

We set off, a procession led by two cyclists followed sedately by a car and trailer at about 5 mph with a queue of vehicles slowly forming up behind us in the narrow street. He found us a very nice hotel and brushed aside our grateful thanks. We had a meal and sank gratefully into bed.

The following day was very wet and we arrived on the outskirts of Jesalo at about 8 p.m., secure in the knowledge that, according to the camping guide, the particular camp we had in mind sported a motel as well for the benefit of "weary travellers wishing to spend the night thus prior to setting up camp next day".

The camp was situated on a causeway and, as we drove along through the lashing rain, there was ample evidence of recent heavy storms, trees uprooted and road edges washed away. If all this looked desolate the camp, when we found it, looked even less inviting. 12 foot high concrete walls topped with barbed wire surrounded it. Fierce looking guards ~~manned~~ the firmly closed gates. It resembled a top security prison and my heart sank.

There was, however, a motel - a rather smart one. The entire family trouped in. A rather superior clerk eyed us with obvious distaste. No, he regretted, there were no rooms. Well, we thought, we've camped in the rain before and we trouped back to the gates. Oh no, we were told - in this camp you must pitch before 8 p.m. Could we come back in the morning? But early because they were very full. We would have to be there by 7 a.m. when the first people moved out or we would be unlucky. No, he had no idea where we could spend the night. All the local hotels would be full - try the motel.

We dripped across the deep carpet. The clerk was adamant but relented enough to direct us to The Hotel Fernando where we might be lucky. By now I had realised that most continentals have a soft spot for children. Mine, like their parents, were by now suitably bedraggled, so having located the hotel we all went in, but they had no rooms either. One of the kids, bless them, started to cry and the proprietress, dear woman, said "Una momenta" and disappeared to reappear almost at once smiling. It seemed that one of her staff lodged in a nearby house and had offered to give up her room to us for the night. She, herself, would share with another girl on this occasion. We thanked her most warmly and were shown to the house. We put up camp beds for the children and slept on the flock mattress as soundly as if it had been deep interior springing.

When we woke early next day the house was quite deserted. We finally tracked down one member of the family, paid and thanked them and drove back to the still closed gates of the camp without benefit of breakfast or even a wash to finally be admitted at 8 a.m. sharp.

Inside the forbidding gates it really was a superb camp. Beautifully situated at the edge of the sea. Very large, but broken up into small, well screened areas, well equipped with table tennis, volleyball, miniature golf and other games, a large very sophisticated shopping centre, hairdressers, jewellers, several restaurants and a variety of other attractions.

When camping one soon learns that the important things in life are the toilet facilities and the water tap. The arrangements for these seemed superb, even containing hot showers - things unheard of anywhere else.

There were very few empty spaces so we chose one near to the toilet block. Suddenly we were surrounded by several Germans, all trying to tell us something. Unable to make us understand, they proceeded to demonstrate by picking up our half erected tent and carrying it further down the camp to a spot just being vacated by another camper, where they proceeded to erect it for us. We were bewildered, naturally, but the daughter of the family managed to explain that the spot we had chosen was not only noisy but sometimes smelly as well, so again, we expressed our gratitude and while the family were setting up camp I set to and performed my usual ritual of cooking bacon and eggs.

This time, once set up, we were much more comfortable, although when we commenced to dig trenches it did give rise to some amusement (we had the last laugh though as later we were among the few who were not flooded out).

This particular camp was German run, with the traditional German efficiency. Twice a day all the undergrowth was sprayed with insecticide, very effective. The spray operators had a perverted sense of humour and one soon learnt not to embark on a meal taken under ones tent awning at "spraying time" or you would certainly receive a generous helping of insecticide as a garnish.

There were very strict rules about noise after 11 p.m. to which we heartily agreed until we were having a rather hilarious card game one evening and forgot the time. We looked up to see the barrel of a shotgun and two stern faces glowering at us.

We were unfortunate too with the state of the sea which was rough for the first week. The danger flags were flying and the guards made sure that no one even paddled although it was very hot. We had our usual major thunderstorm and the pathways were inches deep in water in no time. (so were most of the tents)

The children went for a fishing trip and came back with an assortment of sea creatures which they left in a bucket, unknown to me, while they rapidly and fragrantly decomposed.

Various trips were arranged to places of interest. One of these was to Venice and we decided to join this party for our first visit. This trip was organised by a gentleman nicknamed 'The Admiral' - a portly little Italian in a peaked cap. We were instructed to meet, in our cars, at the main gates at 6 p.m. when we would travel in convoy to 'the Ponta Sabioni' to catch the ferry. When we were duly assembled the Admiral leapt into his car and drove at breakneck speed straight out into the main road executing a left hand turn and cutting straight across the main stream of traffic without a pause, leaving the rest of us with no option but to follow suit. Since we had no idea where we were going we dare not lose him and I felt my hair turning several degrees whiter at every heart-stopping manoeuvre we were forced to make. The rest of the trip was undertaken at a fast gallop as well. We were hearded into the Venetian cafe for a meal. The Admiral was up and away just as we swallowed the last mouthful and we raced after him to embark on a gondola trip. Even our Gondalier thought he was the Stirling Moss of the Waterways performing incredible feats of manoeuvring on his long ungainly vessel. From the remarks shouted at him from his fellows and the rejoinders he hurled back, we gathered that he was not popular and assumed that the faster he could complete the circuit the more money he could make.

The boat trip back was rather comic too. It was late and the moon was bright. A member of the crew was strumming out tunes on a guitar and the Admiral was singing. They gave us renderings of well-known Italian, German and French love songs - very romantic, but when they tried to think of an English song for the benefit of the few English aboard the only one they knew was 'Its a long way to Tipperaree' sung rather off key.

During this holiday the children discovered the delight of the surf board and finished up covered in bruises and my husband, who had recently taken up skin diving, discovered the delights of harpoon fishing. Now I am never at ease when my family are in the sea unless I can see all of them. When the children were smaller I used to buy a large balloon for each of them and could keep an eye on them

fairly easily by tying a balloon to their bathing suits.

I spent many agonised hours picturing the children battered unconscious and drowning, my husband harpooned and drowning and wondering what I would do under such circumstances.

Prior to the question of the harpoon, the sea had been alive with fish, almost tame fish. Now they had all taken fright. He emerged triumphant after about three days of almost day long submersion with one poor little sardine about 2 inches long. He handed it to me with some pride and insisted that I clean and cook it.

In the main the holiday was an improvement and the journey home almost pleasant, the only incident being that a wheel fell off the trailer as we were getting onto the boat home. A minor incident which meant stopping about every 10 miles to tighten the unreliable nut. What is more, my daughter's sunburn had almost healed within a week.

#### GROWING BULBS INDOORS

Bill Robinson

1. It is necessary to use good bulb fibre if bulbs are planted in bowls without drainage.
2. The fibre should be evenly damp and after placing the bulbs, fibre should be pressed round them to keep in position; do not press the bulbs down otherwise the fibre becomes firm and the roots will have difficulty in penetrating.
3. For best results after planting, place pots or bowls in a cool part of the garden. They should be covered with 6 - 8 in. of soil, peat or ashes and left undisturbed until transferring indoors. Christmas forcing items should be transferred on or about December 1st. Other forcing bulbs should be left until early January, except later varieties which should be transferred indoors early in February. The best time is always when the flower buds stand out of the neck of the bulb. If a garden is not available, the bowls should be set in a cool, dark place and it is important that the temperature does not rise over 50°. From time to time the bulbs should be watered to keep the fibre damp, but water should not be allowed to stand at the bottom of the bowl. It is important that the fibre is not too dry or too wet. In either case the roots will deteriorate and the plants become stunted.
4. Tulips and hyacinths may be transferred to a temperature of between 65-70° in subdued light to allow the plants to colour, and after a week the bowls may be placed in full light. Daffodils and narcissi should be grown cool and in full light direct from the plunge and under no circumstances should the temperature rise above 50°.
5. Crocus planted in bowls or pots should be placed in a cool shed or frame (without glass) and covered with an inch of peat or leaf mould until the flower buds are showing colour when they should be removed to a cool and light part of the house.
6. Always ensure that fresh air is available and great care should be taken that the bulbs are not grown in a dry atmosphere.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Arthur Monks

May I take this opportunity to thank all my friends who so kindly donated to my leaving present. It really is a splendid decanter (with glasses and has pride of place on our dresser. A special word of thanks must go to Sue Mitton for her discriminating choice and the tasteful way she wrapped it!

There was so much I wanted to say at the presentation but I was so overcome by the occasion that my thoughts 'flew out of the window'.

Principally what I wanted to say was that I regard my six years at the hospital as amongst my happiest working days; I regard the hospital as a community - a family if you like - and I certainly intend to maintain contact with you all in the same way I keep contact with my own family - perhaps not to see you very often but to remember with affection all the friends I have left behind and to look forward to our future meetings.

With very best wishes and thanks.

P. S. I almost forgot the brandy - simply delicious and too nice to be kept for purely medicinal purposes!!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I would like to reply to Dr. Eric Shepherd's criticism of Barbara Castle in last month's 'Insight'.

In fairness to the much maligned lady, she is only the tail wagged by the Labour Left, which is dedicated to phasing out private beds. It seems to be standard practice for the medical profession to blame the Minister when it is often a managerial problem.

Morale in the Health Service is low and there is a shortage of staff and funds. But some of the shortages are exaggerated and I would suggest that most of the so called manpower shortage is in fact an excuse for very poor management. The amount of nonsense that has been written and statements that have been made is almost unbelievable, when anyone who has experienced the before and after of re-organisation knows that there will be many obstacles to overcome, before we become an efficient health service. Non-the-less, this is no excuse for slavishly making appointments just because a yardstick has been established for what is regarded as the norm. The best cartoon I have seen to date sums the whole situation up by showing a magnificent administration block with the words underneath "This is the new administration block; sorry we can't afford to build the hospital."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Jim Foyle

Reluctant as I am to criticise again 'Dr. Shepherd Reports', I feel that certain of his comments in the last issue cannot be allowed to pass without comment.

I refer to his remarks about Mrs. Castle and the 'Phasing out' of private practice from the N.H.S. I would have liked to discuss the notion that this will cost "£30 - 40 millions" but since Dr. Shepherd gives no information about where this originates from or how the sum was calculated, I feel I cannot comment. Could we please have more background information next time before such apparent statements of fact are presented?

In passing, it could be mentioned that far greater sums are squandered on 'prestige' projects such as Concorde and 'prestige' seems to me to be a lot vaguer than Socialism!

The idea of Mrs. Castle destroying what Aneurin Bevin helped to build is, of course, quite ridiculous. Mr. Bevan created the health service in the face of strong opposition from the medical profession and the inclusion of private practice in the N.H.S. was a compromise to 'placate' the doctors.

It therefore becomes apparent that the confrontation was avoided at the expense of Mr. Bevan's socialist ideals in setting up the N.H.S. but now Mrs. Castle and the present Government have decided that it is time the issue was tackled.

Finally, when I see statements about abolishing private practice (only inside the N.H.S. of course) as 'a tyrannical intrusion into the freedom of patients to choose how they wish to spend their money', I begin to see Red (pun intended). It is a tyrannical intrusion into the freedom of the minority of patients that a small minority can obtain better health care if they happen to be wealthy.

As to the phasing out of private practice being 'divisive', if that means that private beds are 'divided away' from N.H.S. hospitals, thereby increasing the potential number of beds in some, that can only be a good thing, can't it?

Incidentally, if there had been complaints about the pay and conditions of junior N.H.S. doctors in the article, I would have endorsed them.

#### FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC

A birth control clinic is held once a month for all female staff at Leavesden and Abbots Langley Hospitals.

Next clinics:     November 11th  
                      December 9th

Time: 9.30 - 10.30 or by appointment through  
Mrs. Spanswick or the Occupational  
Health Department.

Dr. Ann Horsburgh     Family Nurse: Mrs. Ann Wood  
The clinic is held in rooms adjacent to the Occupational  
Health Clinic (sick bay) in Leavesden Hospital

## SPRINGFIELD SWIMMING POOL

H. B. Francis

We spend all our first months floating around in a blissful state of torpor. It is little wonder then, that if the opportunity presents itself, we head lemming-like towards the limpid warmth of the Mediterranean Sea.

Some ten years ago there was I, sprawled exhausted on the gleaming sands of Venice's Lido. The exhaustion arose from the bathing costume which my mother had insisted on knitting for me. I don't mind admitting that in it I had looked a match for any of the gigolos thronging the beach. That, however, was before I plunged into the briny. In keeping with my manly image I entered the sea via a water chute - shooting down the slippery slope at a rate of knots and piercing the water like a sword. I came to an instant stop, as if held in a vice, and sank to the bottom.

Gathering my wits I leapt to my feet and finding my nose just above water, stepped out determinedly for the shore. My feet slid ineffectually on the sandy bottom. Horror of horrors, I was being held back but felt no pain, so it could not be a shark - perhaps the arm of an octopus? I felt behind very gingerly and discovered a huge bulbous shape.

The unknown is the true spine chiller. A bowl of cold porridge is harmless unless you are feeling your way around a black kitchen when the lights have fused. I steeled myself once more to touch that horrific mass behind me. Again the chill fear and again the stiffening of the short hair at the back of my neck. Then sudden realisation - my mother's brain child, the bathing costume over which her needles had spluttered for hours had stretched and stretched and stretched so that it had become an effective sea anchor, a drogue brim of water.

Redoubling my efforts I made the shore followed by a twenty gallon bag of water. I stood a while to allow my costume to leak from its resplendent fulness down to a sad mess; I then strode up the beach dragging yards of stretched knitting behind, leaving a furrow in the soft sand. Italian titters arose all around me. I stopped, glared, then pulled the knitted train through my legs and threw it over my shoulder and once more like a poor imitation of Ghandi headed for a changing cubicle.

This brings me back to the beginning where I was lying exhausted after my exertions. With nothing better to do I began to think of Leavesden and its children and their need to experience the joys of swimming and how I could get a pool for them.

Nine years later, after a host of disappointments, prevarications and the exhilaration of talking people out of money, a Leavesden child dived into his pool and came to the surface leaving his bathing costume behind, but with a delighted grin on his face.

By Olympic standards our pool is a foot bath, but every child in the school splashes about merrily at least once a week in water nearing 90°F. The disturbed are soothed, spastic muscles are relaxed, the awkward are supported, the aggressive are contained, while the Headmaster has the pleasure of a bikini clad staff cavorting about the school.

We have no changing room or shower as yet, so great care is taken on pottie parades before entering the pool. Of course there is a very efficient filtration plant but this does not prevent us from being anxious when we see a child standing in a corner of the pool looking thoughtful. However, every cloud has a silver lining and I understand that the complexions of the teachers are even more silky than before.

DEREK KIMBER

Catherine Spanswick

An operation nearly 25 years ago started Derek Kimber's association with Shrodells Hospital, for it was soon after his recovery that he applied for the post of foreman in the Building Department - since then he has worked his way through the ranks of General Foreman, Assistant Building Supervisor and Group Building Supervisor until this August when he was appointed Building Officer for the S.W. District.

His experience of the building trade, however, stretches back even further - three generations in fact in his own family, since his grandfather, uncles and cousins as well as himself, all served apprenticeships and earned their livings as carpenters and joiners.

Derek Kimber's own apprenticeship was suddenly interrupted during the war years when his family was bombed out of its home in South East London; he joined the Navy and served until 1946 when he rejoined his family, by then in Watford, home of his mother and grandparents.

Mr. Kimber regards the District appointment as a difficult but interesting job: so far his visits to Leavesden have been principally for familiarisation, since he has been concentrating firstly on organising a "flying maintenance squad" to serve the community clinics and health centres, which in the past have not enjoyed the same resources as their hospital brothers. Responsibility for the community sector has also brought involvement in exciting undertakings such as the home renal dialysis project in which building and engineering departments work together to convert a patient's home and install equipment.

Before long, however, Mr. Kimber intends to see more of Leavesden and hopes to encourage a united and involved team within the District Building Department.

Derek Kimber is married and has three children, (who in their choice of career have not followed family tradition!). His hobbies include a general interest in sport, rigger, athletics and football, which he used to play for the Navy; although now he admits to being principally an armchair enthusiast!

## SOME THOUGHTS ON CANARIES

'TINCA'

The wild canary inhabits the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores, living in open woodland and often about gardens in rural areas.

The food consists of seeds, pieces of leaf and possibly a little fruit. Insect life is eaten particularly when young and being fed. The nest is built in a bush and constructed of grasses and other fibrous materials, for five eggs which are pale greenish blue covered with brownish red spots forming the clutch. The female is a little duller in colour than the male. As is well known the many different breeds of domestic canary have been evolved by selective breeding from this bird.

Newton says that "it seems to have been imported into Europe very early in the sixteenth century".

The Hartz Mountain Roller is famous for its remarkable song of the males who learn their repertoire from 'schoolmasters'.

A ready prepared canary seed mixture is obtainable from pet stores and in addition to this give a wide variety of green stuff - seeding heads of dandelion and milk thistle are favourites and groundsel, chickweed, shepherd's purse, speedwell, seeding grasses, lettuce and watercress can also be given. A piece of apple might be offered. The breeders of dome headed canaries use many kinds of egg food, and there are many recipes for this to be given to breeding birds.

Very many articles on the care of domesticated canaries appear in the periodicals written by those experienced in the care, breeding and exhibiting of this attractive bird.

'TINCA' REVEALS ALL!

R. Thurland

Over the years it has been my privilege to have had articles accepted for publication in the Hospital magazine 'Insight'.

My main interests are angling and bird keeping and breeding - not so much the latter these days. Since my partial retirement I have been more active in the angling world both in participation and writing about fishing and fishermen. I have had many articles published both in Angling Times and Anglers Mail and have also had the opportunity to assist in the making of T.V. angling films and to meet many angling personalities such as Jonathan Webb, Jack Hargreaves and many others from whom I have learnt many things about angling and am still learning.

Possibly you may be wondering what this is leading up to. I overheard a conversation as to the identity of 'TINCA'; who and what is he or she?, among other queries. So to put enquiring minds at ease I felt that I had better explain. 'Tinca' is the later name for Tench and Tench being my favourite fish I adopted 'Tinca' as a pen name. I trust that curiosity has been satisfied and that we can all settle down to worry about other things.

NASCOT LAWN TRAINING  
HOSTEL

Frank and Greta Trevers

Monica Westcott and Phyllis Butler - not forgetting 'Micky the Cat', who completes the therapeutic team!

First some interesting facts and figures:- the hostel has been open four years today. The present staff are Frank and Greta Trevers (Mum and Dad), Dorothy Holman,

We have places for 12 women coming from Leavesden - ages have ranged from 17 to 63 years. Our 57th resident has just arrived (this total does not include re-admissions). Placements for past residents include:- 1 married, 1 to L/A Old Peoples' Home, 15 to L/A Hostels, 3 in residential work and 11 discharged into the community. Some have returned to Leavesden for a further period of treatment, but always with the possibility of re-admission to the Hostel.

The aim of Nascot Lawn is to create a family atmosphere and to help the residents to adjust from the necessarily-enforced discipline of the wards to a degree of independence and self-discipline. This is encouraged in a number of ways; each one is given responsibility for taking her part in the general work of the home - as in any other family - and also to have a caring attitude towards other members of the group. Rules are kept to a minimum, just enough to ensure the comfort and well-being of all, and everyone is encouraged to use their free time in a constructive way as suits their individual taste. We are able to treat each resident as an individual and try to bring out their latent talents.

Training is given in personal hygiene, laundry work, housework, shopping and cooking. Also use of telephone and Post Office and other outside facilities, e.g. hairdressers, dry cleaners, laundrette etc. All residents are registered with a local G.P. and those who go out to work also register with local dentists, opticians and chiropodists. Mr. and Mrs. Trevers are both trained teachers of the mentally handicapped and give regular instruction on subjects such as money values, reading, writing and telling the time. All members of the Staff contribute their skills to encourage a variety of activities and hobbies. Facilities are provided for indoor and outdoor games, music-making, art, sewing etc. Care of pets and nature study are encouraged. A weekly Bible Study and Discussion Group is led by a friend from St. Luke's Church and the 18/25 yr. group of young people visit the Hostel regularly. Friends and neighbours from the local community have been invited to a number of projects including dances and socials, a Garden Fete, jumble sales and sales of work. All residents are encouraged to invite their friends home and to entertain them.

We have been on holiday to the Isle of Wight each year and also on many outings to places of interest, theatre etc. One of the most popular outside activities has been the attendance of the majority at a L/A Evening Class for Cookery and Homemaking held at the nearby Cassio College. Most of the residents attend the local churches.

Weekly conferences are held with Consultant, Social Worker and Staff and these have proved invaluable in planning the care and future prospects of each resident. As Nascot Lawn is a short-stay hostel (residents come for a period of between 6 months and 2 years) we do

our best to give each individual the necessary help and preparation for whatever type of placement is considered best for her. One of the most satisfying parts of the job is the continuing follow-up of past residents and we are visited by a number of these and hear from many more by 'phone and letter.

We cannot do better than sum up with some quotes from a recent discussion when residents were asked to give their thoughts and opinions on the Hostel and its function:-

"The place doesn't look too modern, you know." "Its the nicest house in the road." "I like the way the bedrooms are set out." "Nice colours" "Helping with the work is good for us if we want to become independent." "I like some kinds of housework" "Yes, I do enjoy the cookery classes." "I wish we had more fish, kippers are nice." "And herrings" "I don't like sardines" "The new fish pond is interesting and I like the flowers." "I like the apple tree with the cooking apples on it" "I'm glad Dad left a lot of wild things in the garden too." "I like Micky."

Please support our next fund-raising activity:-

A BRING AND BUY SALE AND COFFEE MORNING  
WILL BE HELD AT THE HOSTEL ON SATURDAY  
8TH NOVEMBER from 10 a.m. to 12 noon

All proceeds towards the residents' Christmas Outing. Please come and tell your friends

LEAVESDEN AND ABBOTS LANGLEY  
SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

SATURDAY November 1st	Group - Datson Sound
SATURDAY November 8th	Group - Skyways
SUNDAY November 9th	Piano and drums in lounge
THURSDAY November 13th	Disco in hall
SATURDAY November 15th	Group - Rockferry
SUNDAY November 16th	Piano and drums in lounge
SATURDAY November 22nd	Group - Everglades
SUNDAY November 23rd	Piano and drums in lounge
THURSDAY November 27th	Group - Gabriel (bar ext.)
SATURDAY November 29th	Group - Charlie Brown

Members free - guests 50p

Tickets may be obtained from  
the bar