

NUTLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

THE WAR YEARS 1939-1945

The W.I. contributed an enormous amount to the home front, their main contribution was in growing and preserving food. One positive outcome was the formation of the W.I. College, Denman College, which opened in 1948. In 1940 the National Federation of W.Is began to administer the Ministry of Food's preservation scheme. By 1945 there were 6,033 W.Is.

1939

The membership had fallen to 73.

In preparation for the evacuees members filled 240 mattresses. Mrs. Wall was appointed as leader for the Produce Guild. Miss Fountain had to resign as Secretary because she felt that living at Crowborough would make travel to Nutley difficult. Miss Riley was elected in her place.



Miss Fountain 1926-1939

Throughout the war years Lady Castle Stewart was the President, Miss Fountain and Miss Riley the Vice Presidents in 1939, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Ryall in 1940, and the Honourable Mrs. Bingham and Miss Riley for the years 1941 until 1945. They met monthly in the Memorial Hall.

In **June 1939** a canteen was set up in the Memorial Hall for British troops in the area.

In **September 1939** Lady Castle Stewart asked members if they should continue the meetings and it was agreed unanimously to do so. Letters had been sent to individual Institutes with lists of activities, which they could undertake.



Miss M.T. Riley

The evacuees arrived and at the beginning of the new term in September Nutley school numbers had increased from 97 to 125.



NUTLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.
"For Home and Country"
PROGRAMME
1939.

President—
 THE COUNTESS CASTLE STEWART.

Vice-Presidents—
 MISS FOUNTAIN. MISS RILEY.

Hon. Secretary— **Hon. Treasurer—**
 MISS M. A. FOUNTAIN; MRS. RYALL,
 Forsyte Cottage, School House,
 Crowborough. Nutley.

Committee—

Mrs. Allan,	Mrs. Ridley,
Mrs. Appleby,	Mrs. J. Ridley,
Mrs. Bannister (Asst. Sec.)	Mrs. Robinson,
Mrs. Grover,	Mrs. G. Sayers,
Mrs. Kirby,	Mrs. Sparks,
Mrs. MacVitty,	Miss Tribe,
Miss Penfold,	Mrs. Wall.

Tea Committee. Mrs. Kirby, Mrs. F. Ridley,
 Miss Penfold, Miss Tribe, Mrs. J. Ridley.
W.I. Stall. Mrs. Grover & Mrs. G. Sayers.
Red Cross Library Secretary. Mrs. Grover.
National Savings Association Sec. Mrs. Hudson.

NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER 23rd at 2-45 p.m.
Entertainment—Miss Vernon in Monologues, Mime, etc.
Annual Meeting. Ballot for New Committee.
Competition—Christmas present costing not more than 1/-
 Bills to be shown.
 Collection of toys for hospital

Nov 27th, Annual Council Meeting.
Corn Exchange, Lewes.

DECEMBER.

MEMBERS' MEETING, date to be fixed later.
Dec 6th. Xmas Fair & Whist Drive, Town
Hall and Corn Exchange, Lewes.

~*~*~

NOTE.—
MEETINGS are held on the Fourth Thursday in every month at 3 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, unless otherwise stated

COMMITTEE MEETINGS on the preceding Monday at the same time and place.

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE to Women's Institutes is 2/- and should be paid to Mrs. Ryall at the beginning of the year.

TEAS. Every member is asked once in the year to provide 1/- worth of cake (home-made or otherwise) or bread and butter towards a tea at a monthly meeting. Postcards are sent out by the Committee reminding members when their turn is coming.

Already in Nutley a Welfare Committee had been set up and the W.I. offered to take over the management of the making and mending party for making clothes for the necessitous evacuated school children. A sub committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mrs. Hudson.

It was decided to ask the two teachers from the schools to determine the children with the most need.

Members were asked to help at the school canteen from 11.30a.m. until 1.30p.m. to relieve the teachers in minding the children who were not having a meal.

At the **November 1939** meeting it was decided to invite Mr. Owen, as deputy head of The Joseph Lancaster School, and Miss Wansburgh, as deputy head of St. Mary's School, and their staff to the Nutley Christmas party.

A collection was made for sending cigarettes to soldiers, a dance was organised which raised £3 for the purchase of wool for soldier comforts and Mrs. Hudson was appointed the National Savings Association representative. The Waste Paper Salvage Scheme was brought to members notice.

In **December 1939** Lady Castle Stewart and the W.I. in the Memorial Hall entertained the Nutley school children and evacuees. Soldiers from local billets were entertained at a Christmas party.

1940

The membership rose to 88.

The average attendance at monthly meetings was 50.

Members commenced knitting for the Sussex County Welfare Association and the Army Comforts Depot.

At the **March 1940** meeting a request for extra sugar for preserving was forwarded to the authorities and members were urged to grow as much fruit as possible. A depot was to be set up and in the short-term surplus fruit was to be sent to the W.I. Jam Centre in Forest Row. A cookery school had also been set up in Forest Row and some members wished to go. Lectures on several wartime topics were also taking place in Uckfield.

Members for the Blind took on Flag Day collections. A Pound Day for the New Sussex Hospital was organised.

They also undertook the distribution of seeds sent from America, to boost local grown produce.

Eggs, flowers and toy collections were made for the hospitals.

A scouring party was organised to find scrap iron thrown out on to the forest.

The result was sold for £7.3s.2d. and given to the wool fund.

Parcels were sent to refugees and homeless Londoners.

The **July 1940** meeting reported that half a ton of newspaper had been collected in the village and sold for £1 13s 18d.

It was decided to cultivate the 3/4 of an acre at Warrens Acre by allotments. By **September 1940** salvage collected had been sold for £5 5s, the money to go to the wool fund. 112 garments had been made to date. These included khaki gloves, pullovers and mittens. The surplus fruit and vegetables had been sent to Forest Row for bottling, canning and preserving. Collections of books were made by Mrs. Grover for the Red Cross. Dressmaking classes were taking place in the village.

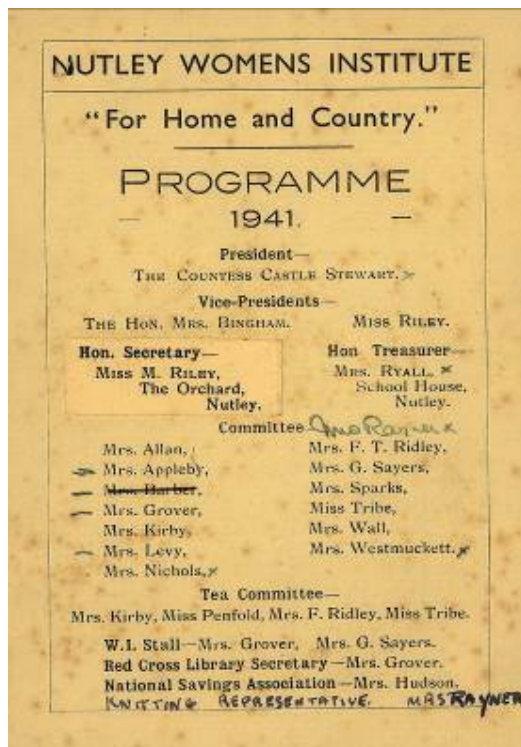
A Soldiers Canteen started by members in the Men's Clubrooms in the Memorial Hall gave hospitality to soldiers, and also members entertained in their homes.

Christmas help was sent to the adopted family and the W.I. co-operated with other local societies to send parcels to Nutley men serving abroad. Mrs. Robinson was the W.I. representative.

December 1940

Christmas parties were organised for the school children and evacuees, whose numbers had now risen to 140. Also the servicemen billeted locally were invited

1941



The membership was 88 and the average attendance at monthly meetings was 55.

February 1941 saw a request for the W.I. to grow more onions and tomatoes, and to knit garments for the homeless of London. 2000 tomato plants would be available in May at a cost of 5s. a dozen.

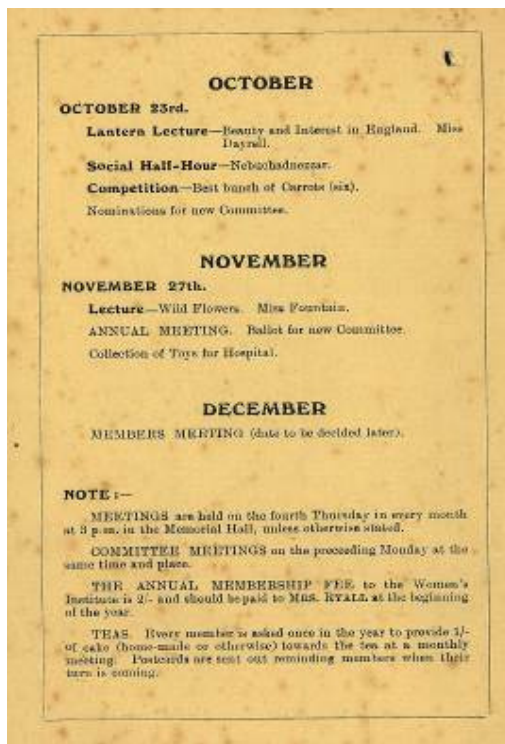
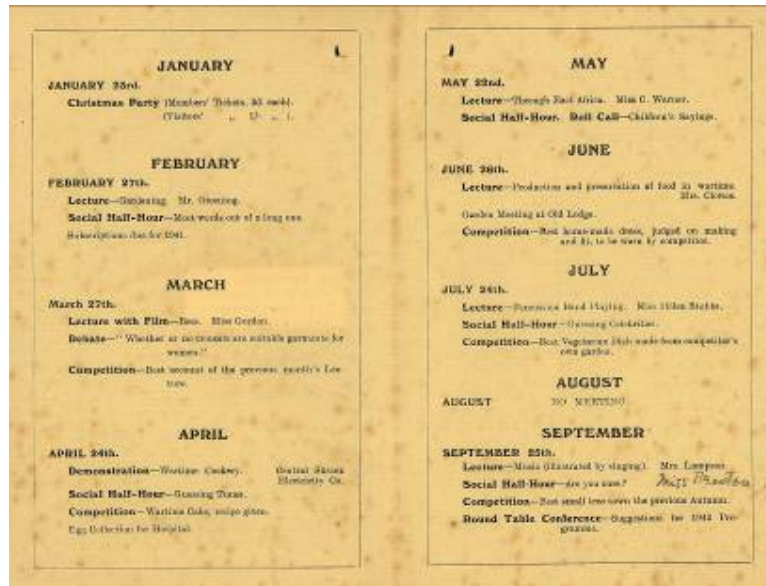
Waste paper was collected, hampers of fresh vegetables were sent to Newhaven for the Navy and knitting continued for the forces.

During the summer months herbs were collected, including foxgloves and nettles, which were dried in Mrs. Bingham's barn. These were sold for medicinal purposes.

Members organised A Pound Day for the New Sussex Hospital, Geranium Day, dances and whist drives for St. Dunstons and Dr. Banardo's. to a party.

By **Sept 1941** knitting wool was rationed so knitting for the troops had to be scaled down. Some wool could be obtained with vouchers and Mrs. Raynor was the knitting representative.

Monthly meetings included talks by members from other voluntary organisations and practical tips were shared by the membership. These included recipes for eggless cakes.



In **December 1941** the school requested helpers to distribute the milk from 10.15-11,15a.m.

Members co-operated with other local societies in the Christmas parcel scheme for Nutley men serving abroad.

The War Savings reached £172.5s.0d. by the end of the year.

Christmas parties were held for the school children and soldiers.

The soldiers canteen had a very busy year and the first Canadians said that it was the friendliest village they had met so far.

1942

The membership was 73 and the average attendance at monthly meetings was 45.

Members voted for a 1d. collection at monthly meetings for the Red Cross. A rural meat pie scheme was started in Nutley, undertaken by a local bakery. Fresh vegetables continued to be sent to Newhaven for the Navy. Surplus fruit went to the Forest Row jam centre and some members volunteered to help there.

Herbs were collected and sold with the proceeds going to the Red Cross.

Members helped with the distribution of school milk.

Geranium Day, a Pound Day, whist drives and dances for funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital, Dr. Banardo's and St. Dunstans were organised.

PROGRAMME

"THE STOLEN SPELL"

(A Jolly Tale of Once Upon a Time)

Scene The Palace Courtyard

CHARACTERS

The King.....	C. J. Ryall
The Queen.....	Daphne White
Rudolf, Captain of the Guard.....	Robert Stuart
Jennefer, the Woodcutter's daughter.....	Ethel Simmons
The Wizard.....	Eleanor Castle Stewart
The Cook.....	F. Washington
The Prime Minister.....	Owen Nichols
The Sweep.....	John Allan
The Court Ladies.....	Molly Clements E. Sygrove

Guest Artists, Michael Ryall and Allan Norris

Band of the Queens Own Rifles of Toronto

Produced by Noreen Wall. Accompanist, Helena Levy.

January 1942

Members organised an entertainment for funds with the help of their menfolk and the band of the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto. The profits for the two nights was £26.1s.0d.

Donations from the profits of the Soldiers Canteen were sent to the sports funds of the regiments using it. Also donations went to the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, Merchant Navy, Russian Red Cross and Uckfield Air Training Corps., 3 per cent going to the Sussex Welfare Association.

A new radiogramophone was bought.

The Canadians were interested to know that it was run by the W.I., so well known to them back home.

Parcels for the men of Nutley serving were assembled and the usual Christmas parties took place.

The War Savings amounted to £146.10.0d.

1943

The membership was 84 and the average attendance at monthly meetings was 42.

Classes were started on the renovation of clothes.

A Discussion Group was started at Mrs. Bingham's house where members could take their knitting and mending.

An Infant Welfare Clinic was started in the village.

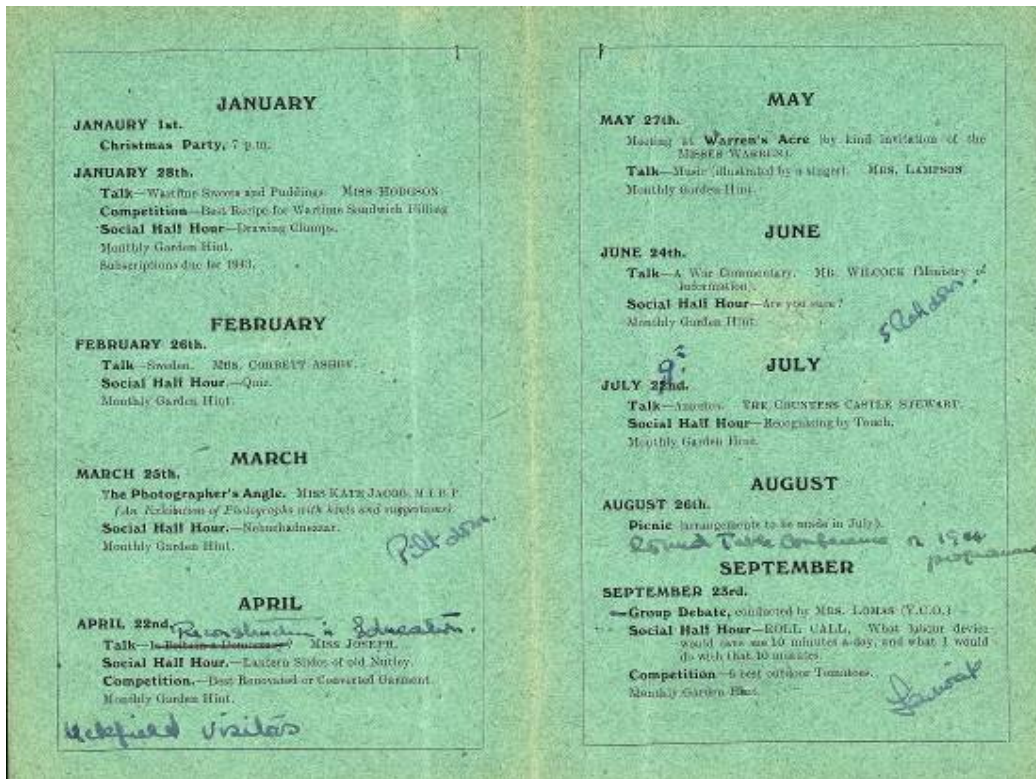


An appeal was made for more Land Girls and Mrs. Grover was the registrar.

Monthly garden hints were given by the husband of one of the members.

Herbs continued to be collected and sold, and 88lbs. weight of onions were grown for the N.A.F.F.I. with the proceeds going to the Red Cross.

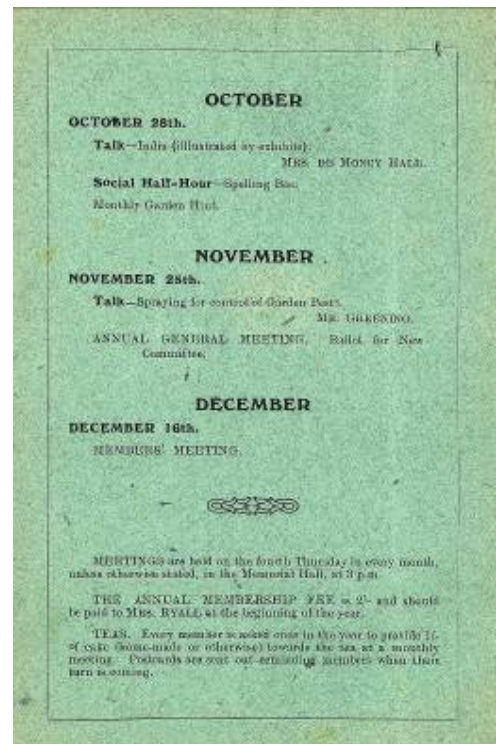
In **June 1943** new ration books were to be introduced and Nutley residents had been told that they must journey to Crowborough to collect them. The W.I. sent a letter to the authorities and as a result the ration books came to Nutley.



The Soldier's Canteen was very busy and included a record breaking week when in co-operation with the W.V.S. a sock darning service was organised and dozens of flashes and badges were sewn on.

Owing to transport difficulties for some members to attend the Old Lodge garden meeting the haycart from the windmill was used as transport.

Members continued to organise a Pound Day, Geranium Day, entertainments and vegetables were sent to the Navy.
 The War Savings were £209.7s.6.d.



1944

The membership was 75 with an average attendance at monthly meetings of 45.

The Discussion Group continued and the choir was formed with Mrs. Levy as it's conductor.

Members knitted for the forces and the refugees in Europe. Knitting wool was provided.

The distribution of National milk and cocoa was undertaken.

A produce show was organised and onions grown for the Red Cross and vegetables were sent to the Navy.

Pruning classes were started and members filled in a questionnaire on Water and Sewerage which involved a house to house visit.

The W.I. Canteen was closed for three months as the Canadian troops had left. Members took the opportunity to thoroughly spring cleaning the rooms, including painting and distempering. With the arrival of the British troops they were soon in great demand.

Owing to transport difficulties the garden meeting was held at the Court House instead of Old Lodge.

Collections for a Pound Day, the 1d. Red Cross and the library continued.

Members took a team to the Lewes Drama Festival.

The supervisory help in the school and canteen continued.

The War Savings was £738.1s.6d.

1945

The membership was 75 with an average of 45 at monthly meetings.

Toymaking classes commenced with Mrs. Breach and glovemaking classes with Miss P. Walton.

Members knitted for the Merchant Navy and for the European Relief, receiving with some other W.I.s a special mention for the amount sent to the latter.

With the help of members Miss M. Warren collected and sent off 15 large packages to Holland.

Nutley W.I. Market was started.

Entertainment in aid of St. Dunstons and the Cancer Campaign raised £60.

Flag day took place for King George's Fund for Sailors and a Pound Day for the New Sussex Hospital.

The choir entered the Lewes Festival and reports from sub groups were begun at monthly meetings.

21st. Birthday Celebrations



Founder members present, Mrs. F. Taylor, Mrs. F.T. Ridley, Miss Errey, Mrs. Appleby, Mrs. Cecil Turner, Lady Castle Stewart, Mrs. George Sayers, Miss Riley, Mrs. Kirby, Mrs. Grover, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Holman.

The 21st. birthday party took place at the Spring Produce Show. All the members except for six were present. Their President of 21 years, Lady Castle Stewart was presented with a box of chocolates. Letters, cards and telegrams were received from old members who had left the area. A three tiered cake was made by Mrs. Appleby with ingredients supplied by members.

Victory celebrations in Europe took place on the May Bank holiday, with sports and a tea provided by members.

In June 1945 the Nutley War Memorial Committee was set up with Lord Castle Stewart as Chairman. The W.I. were asked for a representative to sit on the committee and Miss Riley was elected by the membership.

A questionnaire was sent to the W.I. for discussion. From the discussions it was decided that a new licensed club was preferable. A youth club and a room for child welfare were considered important.

However top priority should be given to have houses for the elderly.

Blackout material was collected and sent to France for overalls.

The Soldier's Canteen sent a contribution to the Y.M.C.A. Funds in Europe.

War Savings were £463.10s.6d.

At National level the A.G.M. decided to form a W.I. College. There were now 6,033 W.I.s . War Savings were £463.10s.