

FROM EAST TO WEST WITH CLUB GIRLS

FROM THE EAST

Irene Dolan, Dunrobin, Carleton County, tells of her experiences as a Club girl.

"When the young girl of today finds out just what different organizations have in store for her she must be so thankful for the wonderful opportunity which was not handed out to her mother. As the Bible says, "Seek and ye shall find". There is nothing more true.

My first experience in club work had a rather unique birth. Another girl and I were sent to a W. I. leaver training school on Kitchen Ensemble, just because none of the women of the Institute thought they had time to attend. Of course we were very meek, being cast in among older ladies who knew all about sewing when neither of us knew much more than the simple running stitch. However, we took up the class and both made dresses and aprons. My first dress was a complete failure, but I was now interested in the art of sewing and felt the urge to go on,—so I made another. I liked it much better and felt now I was a real dressmaker. However, I am still learning and still have a lot to learn before I'll be a dressmaker.

However, at the achievement day we met our County Junior Club Leader and she asked us why we didn't belong to the Juniors. We said because we didn't know about it. She invited us to attend leader training school. So we launched out on our Junior Homemaking career. I have attended four leader training schools since then and have carried on three classes and one Garden Brigade Unit. In these clubs I have found priceless information.

But as one thing leads to another, one doesn't just stop at Junior Homemaking Clubs. I was given \$10.00 toward my expenses one year to attend the Toronto Exhibition. This experience I found invaluable, meeting girls from all over the province. I have also attended two conferences held at Kemptville Agricultural School. There you meet girls from different parts of the Eastern Counties and really I think they are incomparable. I am sure that everyone who attended them enjoyed them "to the hilt".

If we want success for our junior organizations we must have unity and could there be any better than among young girls and women who today mean so much to the "extra" production. There isn't any reason why we can't enjoy ourselves as much in our work as our fellow ladies who live in the cities. So by these organizations we are able to give young farm girls the information they would otherwise have missed".

Lucille Vanderhoof, Westport, Leeds County, relates her activities in the club, Being Well Dressed and Well Groomed.

"Are you going to join the club?" That was the popular question among our teen-agers. The club was a group being organized to take up the course "Being Well Dressed and Well Groomed". It sounded very interesting and it was not long until we had a fair sized group.

We had grand times at our meetings and learned so much. Patching and darning were fun when we were all together learning to do something both useful and interesting. Of course we all made mistakes. I remember once I made quite a mix-up of my first attempts at some particular type of sewing. We all had a good laugh about it, but just the same, I tried a little harder next time to do it right. I think that experience has helped me a great deal. In a group as small as ours, you learn to laugh over a mistake and try again.

Every one of us had a liking for nice clothes but we didn't always think about that loose button or small tear. Together, we learned the proper and easiest way to do these simple

yet essential tasks. We began to take pride in being the owner of a self-applied patch, and a neat appearance. We have grown more clothes conscious and remember to take the proverbial 'stitch in time'.

The time enjoyed in our friendly gatherings has surely developed a spirit of co-operation which will always be a great help to us. Our newly acquired ability to look well groomed and keep our clothes repaired and smart looking will be a big help in our share of this war effort. A great deal of credit is due to the Women's Institute Branch for making this opportunity available to us teen-age girls".

FROM THE CENTRE

Shirley M. Harden, Grafton, Northumberland County, belongs to the Garden Brigade.

"This is a report of the Northumberland Junior Garden Brigade as a gardener sees it. The Garden Brigade was brought this year to the girls of Castleton, Wicklow and Vernonville, and Grafton. In the spring twenty girls planned a garden. We were each supplied with twenty packages of vegetable seeds and ten of flowers. The summer being busy, we had very few meetings. An organization meeting was held at Wicklow. There was to be a canning meeting in each of the centres.

Let's change from the general points to something more original. I do not live on a farm myself, but always have a garden. It was divided into two sections to fit my garden space. A damp spring prevented planting until the latter part of May. I must say, though, that it progressed very rapidly. In fact in three weeks' time I had lettuce and radishes.

I learned various things in the garden club this year. Did you know that peas grow nearly as well in August and September as they do in earlier summer? Believe me, they do, except the plants are smaller. Peas at this time of year are a real treat. I had two reasons for planting peas the second time. First, no new potatoes when the green peas were ready; secondly, trouble with some neighbours' cows. Another thing was that spinach can be replanted. Plant it on the same ground as soon as the old goes to seed. Here's a new one, for me, at least—tie a string around the stalks above the onions if you want to have thin necks. This kills the stems while the onion keeps growing.

We had one main purpose in growing a garden this year. Our motto was "Vegetables for Health, Health for Victory". Although the cows damaged my garden I had enough to supply our family of four. I had more carrots than I needed so gave some to my sister who had no garden. Thus I stopped her from buying some foods, very likely canned foods, which some soldier, sailor or airman would have greatly appreciated. I urge you to give any extra vegetables to someone who needs them. Then more canned foods will go to our fighting forces.

Now I would like to tell you of our achievement night. We were very fortunate to have with us Mr. C. H. Hodge, "The Farmer", who gave us some very interesting slides and an address on Home Improvement. He stressed, though, to "grow vegetables during the war and do your home improvement after". The girls set up fifteen exhibits on individual tables, consisting of many varieties of vegetables and a mixed bouquet of flowers. The record books were also displayed. Mr. R. C. Banbury, local Agricultural Representative, and Miss Jean Scott, Home Economics Coach, were in charge of the evening. Many Institute members also attended. The girls tried a short test. Certificates of Achievement were awarded to ten girls. Some musical numbers closed the evening."

FROM THE WEST

Hildreth and Hazel Hall, Tara, Bruce County, are sisters in the second and third years of the Garden Brigades respectively. Hazel is club leader. First, Hildreth's Garden Diary:

"August again! Anyone would know that by glancing at the dinner table overflowing with vegetable goodness. Let me describe such a table. Well, to begin with, there is home-made bread, butter, meat and gravy, but—the pies and cakes are missing! Is that all we hard working people get to eat in August? Oh no! Let's get back to the most plentiful and most essential part of the meal—yes, the vegetables. While a huge plate of crimson tomatoes in the middle of the table are waiting their fate, the potatoes, broccoli in white sauce, buttered beets and sliced raw kohlrabi are being passed around.

Well, you say, there is certainly a lot of work in planting and tending to a garden and then look at the work in preparing the vegetables for a meal. Here's where the Garden Brigade comes in. The keen competition between the girls of these organized garden brigades, the careful guidance of the Home Economics Coach, the information given by free literature, and the determination of all girls to provide their families with essential vegetables prepared and served in a manner which retains the most food value, makes gardening a pleasure.

This year I am completing my second garden brigade project. I thought this year it would be interesting if I arranged my club story in diary form. So here's what happened.

May 5th-May 15: On the evening of May 5 we held our first meeting. Our Coach, Miss Durnin, attended this meeting leaving information and pamphlets. Due to the very backward rainy weather the early part of my garden was planted fourteen days later than last year. Strangely enough my first planting on May 14 seemed very early—in comparison with the planting of Hazel's and the neighbours' gardens. This was due to the fact that my garden was situated on the slope of the hill. June 2—Hazel and I planted out the strawberries, 130 in all. I spent quite some time helping Hazel with her garden as it was all planted by hand except the peas.

June 5-June 30: All my later plantings such as broccoli were planted by June 11th. Hot weather encouraged my garden very much. As there was still plenty of moisture everything flourished, including the weeds. These took much effort to combat but I succeeded in keeping the garden fairly free from weeds. My onions when harvested weighed 80 lbs.

June 30-Aug. 30: By June 30 there was an abundance of fresh vegetables for table use. I found it a good plan to serve the vegetables in a manner attractive to the eye as they always seemed to "go better" and bring forth compliments. Even by the end of August my garden still looked fresh.

Aug. 30-Sept. 7: Well, tomorrow is achievement day and here I am the night before writing my club story."

A few excerpts from Hazel Hall's story of the club tell of a busy summer.

"Our club meetings had full attendance and we really had fun as well as achieving our record book work.

How we did enjoy each new vegetable as it became ready for use. Even though we had a splendid garden in 1943, spring time found us scarce of variety, and canned goods were hard to get. As the variety grew more plentiful it took considerable less bread and other baking, which is itself a grand aid to solving these wartime shortages as well as being a sure way to better health. Then, too, the sums of money from occasional sales of vegetables are quite a help to one's pocket book.

I am hoping that next year I can add a lot of interesting things to my garden—a few pepper squash, celery, sweet peppers, banana melons and dill. One of these days we are going to make a crock of sauerkraut from the cabbage that are about to split open. As a rule we use our kohlrabi for eating raw but this year we tried cooking it and putting a white sauce on it and all the family liked it.

As a leader of the Brigade I was very pleased that the girls took such an interest in their gardens and club meetings, and hope that I can enroll at least five more members for the next project this fall."

FROM THE NORTH

Charlotte Dodds, Clute, Cochrane District, answers the question, "Has club work been worth while?"

"About four years ago I became a member of the first homemaking club held in Clute. A number of us girls went bravely to the first meeting to start learning about sewing. Since this was not taught in our country schools it was entirely new work for us. The first club, Being Well Dressed and Well Groomed, turned out to be a big success.

Our next sewing course was a bit more advanced but thanks to our previous one, our print dresses were made quite easily and fit beautifully.

Our last course, which includes sewing, is Cotton Accessories for the Club Girl's Bed-room. Owing to the fact that this has been a very busy summer for the members, who happen to be all members of the Farm Girls' Brigade, it has not progressed as rapidly as previous courses. As an inexperienced leader of this course, I have to divide my time between gaining confidence in myself as a leader and enjoying the things our course includes. Even so, however, I am going to benefit greatly from it as I have from our other sewing courses. One thing in particular I can thank these courses for is the appreciation of becoming colours, and being able to see for myself that the material I may buy is at least worth the money I have to pay.

Cookery, of which I have taken only two courses as yet, has also taught me a lot. New dishes, not always successes at first I can assure you, make a meal much more interesting to get for the family. One of these courses in particular, The Cereal Shelf, sounds like starting a new day right, but really, it includes dishes for every meal,—puddings, cakes, breads and any number of things made with cereals have opened my eyes to the uses of this food, and a very nutritious and delicious one at that.

The gardening clubs, although I must admit I did not enjoy them as much as the other clubs, were a great help to the winter food situation. Perhaps our gardens were not as large as our southern cousins' were, because of vegetable seed included that our northern climate would not agree with.

The result of these classes has really been magnificent. One of our club girls, with County Honours, and who was assistant leader for a time, has entered the Air Force. Six months after going into uniform she passed her examinations in cookery school, receiving her title, Leading Air-woman. She reported that if it had not been for the help of the classes her progress would have been much slower. As it was, she had a grounding she certainly did not regret having. For myself, upon taking two years home economics at high school away from home, I have found the work lessened almost by half. I had already learned in much more detail parts of our work we were taking.

As our older girls are leaving us, and entering work for themselves, I am sure that they have found, as I have, that they have our homemaking courses to thank for a wider understanding of practical work. Yes, Club Work has been worthwhile."