

1940 OFFICERS ELECTED BY WOODBRIDGE UNITED W.M.S.

Woodbridge United W.M.S. members elected Mrs. K. Stevenson as president for 1940 at their annual meeting in the Parsonage Wednesday.

PRESBYTERIANS HONOUR DEPARTING MINISTER

The Rev. J. S. Roe and Mrs. Roe were honored by Presbyterian congregations of Woodbridge and Knox, Vaughan, on Monday evening.

In recognition of their work since 1935, Mr. and Mrs. Roe, who left for Burlington last week, were presented with a silver tray.

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The Tradition of Christmas Feasting

CUSTOMS HAVE CHANGED SINCE DAYS OF DICKENS BUT THERE IS STILL GOOD CHEER

There are whispers going around, writes Clair Price, to the effect that Christmas, at least for the adults, is not what it once was.

What if Mr. Pickwick could emerge from the greatcoat, shawls and comforters of the Muggleton coach and join us this year, bringing his codfish and oyster barrels with him?

Would our dyspeptic appetites grieve him? Would it dismay him to find us resorting to salted almonds to whet our feeble thirsts?

Truly, to every generation its own Christmas. The beautiful Bethlehem story, which gives the great festival its ecclesiastical name and dress, has never changed and never can change.

The Pickwickian tradition of Christmas feasting fell naturally into the rhythms of rustic life. Farm work declines in the dead of winter, and there was every reason why a generation of red-nosed countrymen, muffled to the ears against the cold, should devote the midnight of the year to a feast of gargantuan eating and drinking.

But even in Mr. Pickwick's time the English towns were growing and country life was declining. The towns have continued to grow—and not only the English towns. More of us are townsmen to-day than ever before, and town life knows no midwinter interlude.

Christmas, indeed, is a very curious blending of two ancient traditions—an austere ecclesiastical tradition and a pagan tradition of feasting which was anything but austere—and the story of Christmas-keeping was for many centuries a story of the constant warring of these two discordant traditions.

It seems to have been Mr. Pickwick who imported the Christmas feasting of the Saxons into England (though not into Scotland), and since then the English-speaking peoples (but not the Scots) have been as confirmed Christmas-keepers as any of them.

Good Cheer

True, we no longer pretend to drain flagons of mead in honor of Odin and Thor, as the skin-clad warriors did in their forests along the Danube and the Baltic.

And this brings up another aspect of the great festival. Probably we are greater epicures than ever today, for we have a vastly richer variety of good things to choose from—turkeys, geese, hams, wines, cheese, caviar, truffles, smoked salmon, pate de foie gras—very greedy some of the shop windows are looking just now.

Fittest Survived

Probably there are families in England who still pass around the wassail bowl while their assembled guests are singing and telling stories in front of the blazing Yule log.

Thus the so-called "lamb's wool" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Darwin might easily have pointed out that Christmas in those days made for the survival of the fittest.

The peacock, as a Christmas dish, seems to carry with it a memory of the days when knighthood was in flower. It is the kind of bird that would add distinction to the Christmas table of the House of Lords, if the lords had no tables of their own at which to dine on Christmas Day.

Boar's Head

But the Christmas boar's head is not extinct, though the wild boar himself has not been known in a wild state in England, probably since the reign of Charles II.

EDGELEY

The December meeting of Edgeley Women's Institute was held at the home of Mrs. Alf Bagg with a good attendance and five visitors.

The delegates who attended the convention at the Royal York Hotel in November were Misses Ruth Smith and Edith Jackson, both bringing back splendid reports.

KLEINBURG

The Kleinburg Y.P.U. held their regular meeting on Monday evening in the basement of the church with the President Mr. Newton Watson in the chair.

Mrs. W. Benstead, the missionary convenor, had prepared the program for the evening but was unable to take charge of the meeting so Miss Masel Shaw took the chair and the programme opened by singing a hymn after which Muriel Bell read a prayer.

LEST HE FORGET

It was 3 o'clock in the morning, and the guard was rather suspicious of the man in evening clothes who walked slowly along the street, crossing and recrossing the road.

"Do you ever go camping?" "No; we get the same effect by taking the screens off the windows."

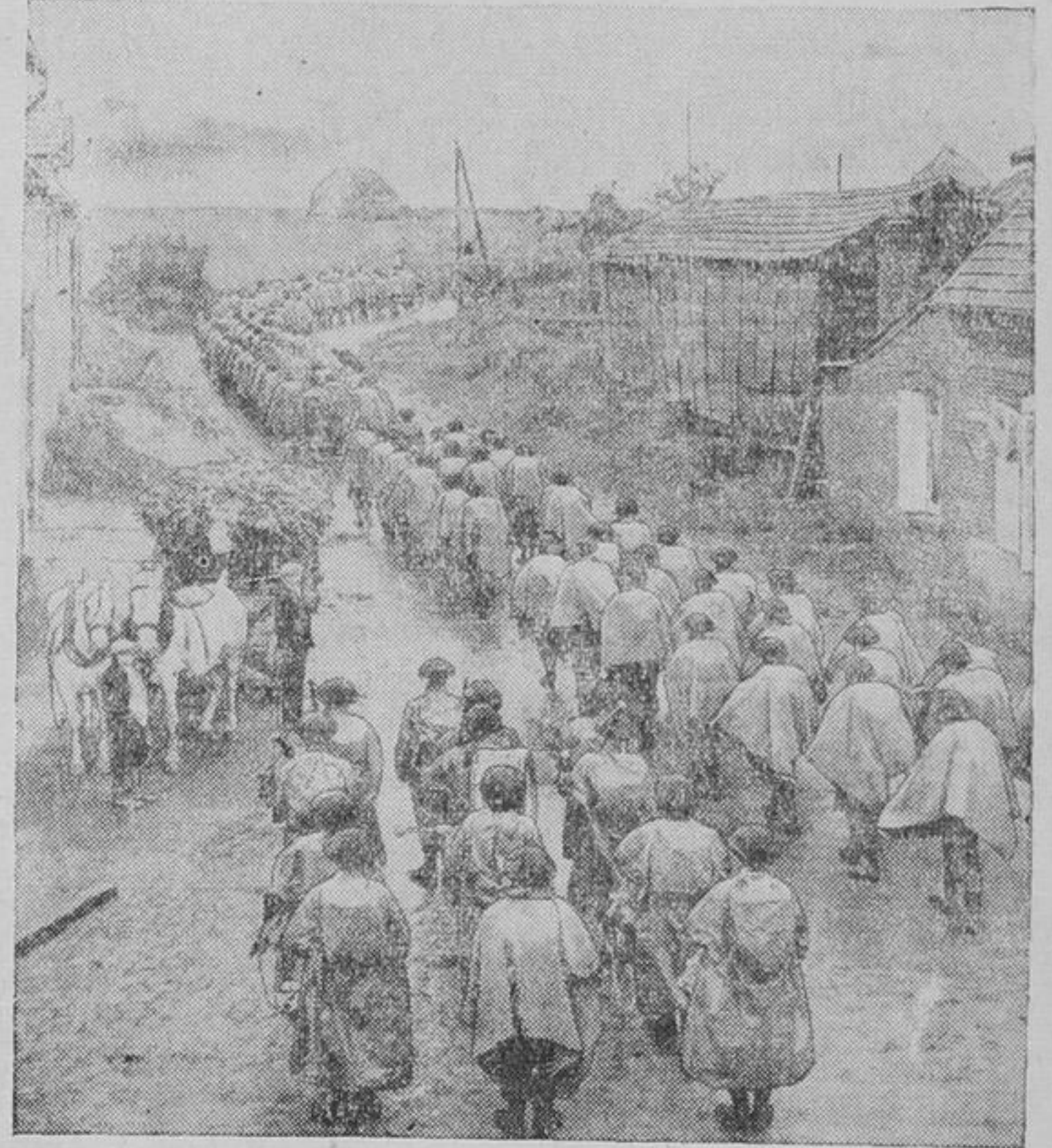
turies is a brief span in the story of the boar's head. That story has been carried back as far as recorded history goes, back to the Scandinavian Yule feast in midwinter at which the wild boar was the traditional sacrifice.

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Two pages of the new book of Canadian ballads by John Murray Gibbon and published by the Ryerson Press, Toronto.



J. M. GIBBON

Singing of Canada—sixty new songs of Canada have come to life over the past few months and now they are given to the world in John Murray Gibbon's newest book "New World Ballads" which has just come from the Ryerson Press, Toronto.