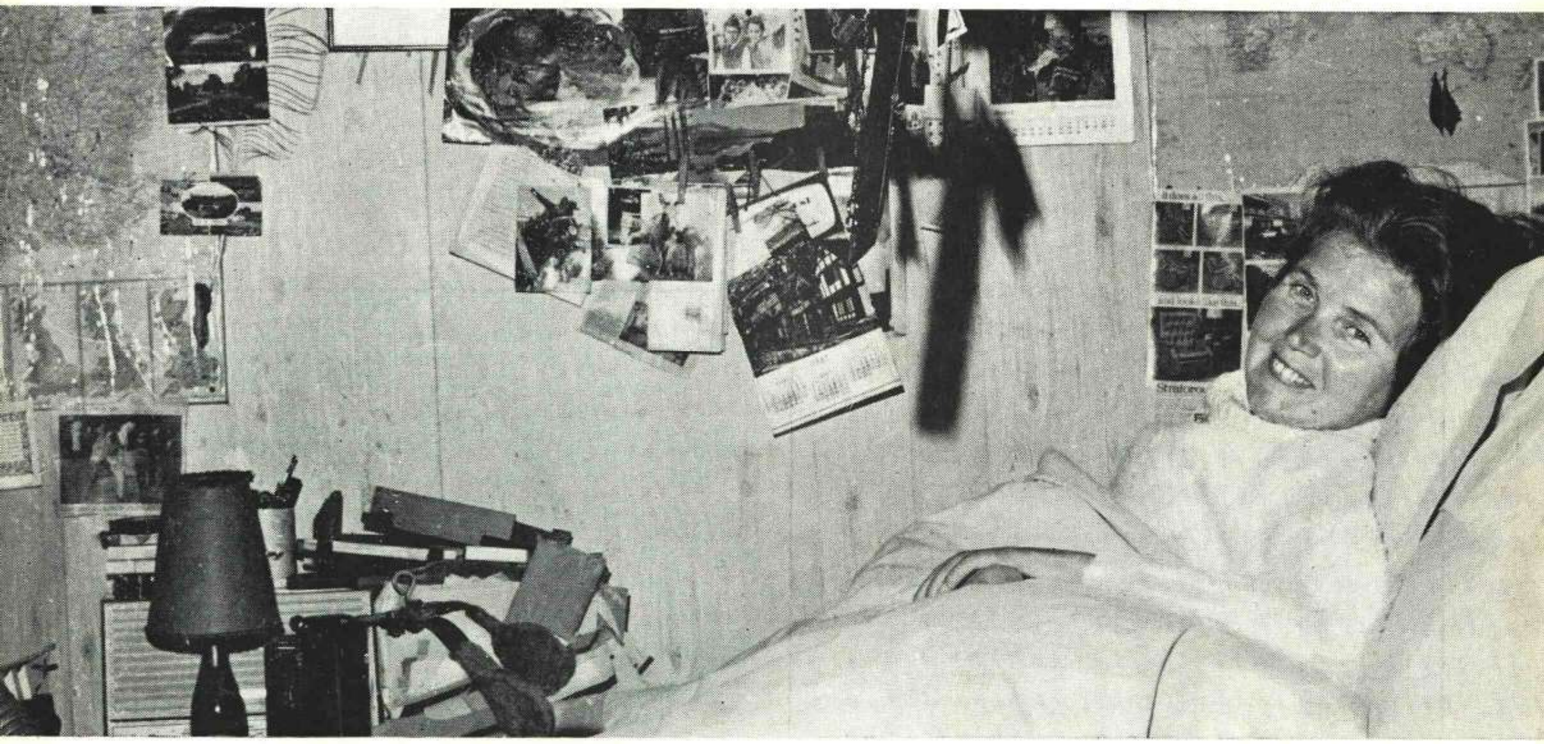
MARCH 1966, VOL. 3 No. 2

THE RESPONAUT

A QUARTERLY BY, FOR AND ABOUT PEOPLE WITH RESIDUAL RESPIRATORY PARALYSIS



Easter Greetings

Green for Spring. *The Responaut*, a living thing, is thriving and we send thanks once again to all the people who help it to do so. Unashamedly we publish more letters of praise for *The Responaut* and quote a piece from the *New Zealand Home Journal :* "A compliment is a gift not to be thrown away carelessly unless you want to hurt the giver."

We think we have answered every letter that has come in. It is most gratifying for us to know that not only are we on the receiving end of so much affection and enthusiasm but that people are writing across the pages, so to speak, finding old friends and making new ones through *The Responaut*. Please send all letters with money to Margaret, our treasurer, and all letters for publication and alterations to the mailing list to Elizabeth, our secretary. We do not have any Covenant schemes but money can be sent to the Responaut Account at Lloyds Bank, Newbury.

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PUBLICATIONS

The British Polio Fellowship Bulletin, Mrs. Alison Barnes (Ed.), 39 Ashworth Mansions, Elgin Avenue, London, W.9.

Caliper, Journal of the Canadian Paraplegic Association, 153 Lyndhurst Ave., Toronto 4, Ontario, Canada.

The Cheshire Smile, Frank E. Spath (Ed.), Le Court, Liss, Hants.

International Rehabilitation Review, International Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, 219 East 44th Street, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.

The Muscular Dystrophy Group, Quarterly Journal, 26 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

National Cripples Journal, Len Tasker (Ed.), 30 Thistley Field, Coundon, Coventry, Warwicks.

Para-Graphic, B.C. Division Canadian Paraplegic Association, Doug Wilson (Ed.), 1347 S.W. Marine Drive, Vancouver 14, British Columbia, Canada.

The Popinjay, c/o V. R. Stewart, Esq., Polio Unit, Priorsdean Hospital, Milton Road, Portsmouth, Hants.

Puffin, Ken Holland (Ed.), Polio Unit, Rush Green Hospital, Romford, Essex.

Radial, Official Journal of the Radio Amateur Invalid and Bedfast Club, Mrs. Frances Woolley (Sec.), 331 Wigan Lane, Wigan, Lancs.

Rehabilitation (Journal of the British Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled), Tavistock House (South), Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

Toomey J. Gazette, Editorial Office, Box 149, Chagrin Falls, Ohio, U.S.A.

Wider Horizons, c/o Miss A. M. Dobson, 'Yewdale,' Brow Crescent, Windermere, Westmorland.

HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS

Cheshire Homes : Frank Spath, Ed., The Cheshire Smile, Le Court, Hants. *(For information concerning proposed homes for responauts at Liss.)*

Disabled Living Activities Group of the Central Council for the Care of the Disabled, 39 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Disablement Income Group, Rellen House, Busbridge Lane, Godalming, Surrey.

International Voluntary Service, 72 Oakley Square, London, N.W.1. *(Write for names and addresses of county secretaries.)*

The Volunteer Emergency Service, 1 Plough Lane, Wallington, Surrey.

ADVISERS

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Hobbies :
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165 Hollyfast Road,
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BOOKS

Designing for the Disabled, by Swelyn Goldsmith, R.I.B.A. Technical Information Service.

Horizontal Man, by Paul Bates and John Pellows : Longmans.

Margin of Safety, by John Rowan Wilson: Collins.

Polio is not for Pity, by Irene Holdsworth: Allen and Unwin.

Take My Hands, by Dorothy Clarke Wilson : Hodder and Stoughton.

Something to do at Home, by Elizabeth Gilzean : Museum Press. This book is useful to those who still have the use of their hands.

Over My Dead Body, by June Opie : Methuen and Pan Paper Back.

Do ask for these books at your Public Library.

The opinions expressed in The Responaut are not necessarily those of the editor.

"1965 CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM RESPONAUT READERS TO RESPONAUT READERS"

We do not have a piece on education this time, although there is a letter which is almost an article from Mr. Atterbury. We have information about employment and income prospects. For the next issue Paul Bates will be writing a piece about his work which has increased four or five times in volume in the past year. The piece on entertainment is especially encouraging: the writer wishes to remain anonymous but we shall be happy to forward enquiries to him. Respiratory paralysis being international makes International Rotary aid most welcome.

Now that *The Responaut* can carry pictures and much more copy do let us have any scrap of information, however small, which may be useful to any respo or friend in any part of the world. The themes of our next issue are Housing and Help but contributions on any subject are very welcome.

In the rush of telephone calls and letters because it was Christmas, because we had a new style *Responaut* and because there were articles in the *Daily Mirror*, *The Nursing Times* and *The Times*, a Mrs. Morton of The Guardian Angels Baby Sitting Service, 28 St. Albans Crescent, Bournemouth (Tel. Bournemouth 53193) rang to say that she would like to offer respo the chance of running baby-sitting agencies for her. Our V.E.S. County Organisers have been here to try hand-pumping. Berkshire Welfare Department invite chairbound, blind or deaf people living in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire who are between 18 and 30 to join them on a trip to Holland from 25th August to 5th September. Enquiries to Mr. Cocks, County Welfare Services Department, Abbey Mill House, Abbey Square, Reading.

ENTERTAINMENT

THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

On 1st September 1965 and on 15th January 1966 the Hendon Rotary Club organised an outing for two polio patients from the West Hendon Hospital.

Both patients were in wheelchairs, and both had cuirasses on all the time.

They were taken by ambulance, which some years ago had been specially designed, to the main doors and from then on everything went perfectly. The House Manager, personally in attendance, together with Chief of Staff and their own Red Cross nurse, looked after the party, and nothing was wanting.

There was an easy journey from the door to a very large lift, then on to the 5th floor where the wheelchairs were taken right into position.

The view was excellent, right in the centre of the Hall, with no obstructions in front, and plenty of room to manoeuvre all the necessary apparatus. The Management had installed permanent plug positions so that the use of batteries to work the apparatus was cut to a minimum.

This outing is really an absolute must for anyone who is confined to wheelchairs, even if they require breathing lungs. The party the Rotary Club took consisted of 2 patients, 2 nurses, 2 technicians, 2 drivers and 2 police escorts. The cost of the wheelchairs was only 5s. a chair for the patient *and* attendant. This cost is the same for any performance, even if all the other seats were sold at 50 guineas. To accommodate all the helpers several seats were reserved in the row immediately in front of the wheelchairs.

The House Manager said that he would welcome any visits of this kind as the facilities there are actually granted by the Greater London Council.

Should any organisation require further details the Rotary Club would be pleased to give them all help as it is such an easy evening to arrange, and will mean so much to others.

LENA JEGER MP

HELPING THE CHRONIC ILL

THE LETTER is not easy to read. It is clear from the crippled script that its writing was of infinite difficulty. " In 1941 my husband, a science master, was discovered to have TB. He was forced to retire on a breakdown pension. I am paralysed. He rises at 6 15 daily, washes and dresses and feeds me. The district nurse could not come so early and my 90-year-old parents cannot turn me . . . He pushes me long walks in my wheel-chair. Every night he drags out the put-u-up on which he has done penance for six years. We don't smoke, don't drink, don't have a car. You will understand how much I wish justice rather than law operated so that a surprise would yet help in making life easier or some dreams attainable. This isn't a moan. We are not unhappy."

I commend this letter (and many more) to the thinkers of all parties concerned with the improvement and extension of our social services. The problem of the younger chronic sick who remain in our own homes has not so far received the attention it deserves. Of course improvements must be made for those who are so deserted and so disabled that they must have institutional care. But where an invalid stays at home, surrounded by loving devotion, is it not time that some payment was made, if only a small proportion of what it would cost to care for the patient in a hospital ?

Fortunately, this point of view is being promulgated in a lively and non-self-pitying way by the Disablement Income Group, a registered charity. It asks for the provision of a modest basic income for all disabled persons ordinarily resident in the UK, whatever the cause of the disablement, and irrespective of previous National Insurance contributions. The allowance would vary with the extent of disablement, but the full amount would be about the same as a retirement pension. Thus the writer of my letter would be receiving in her own right about £4 weekly. These payments could be taxable so that well-to-do invalids would, at the end of the day, receive less.

MASSIVE REVIEW

OF COURSE, a married woman in employment may contribute to National Insurance in her own right—she would then be eligible for benefit in accordance with the number of stamps on her card. But supposing she is a young mother, struck down with poliomyelitis while making a full-time job of her family life ? If her husband can afford a full-time housekeeper he may claim some income tax relief. If he is below the tax paying bracket, or can only afford part-time help, the Inland Revenue takes no cognisance of the situation.

If such a mother puts her children in care and herself in a hospital the community will pay many pounds a week, a sort of broken family bonus. But again there is now an articulate group which produces a quarterly magazine " The Responaut " by, for, and about people with residual respiratory paralysis. " If we survive," one of them writes, " we must somehow maximise our survival."

All these problems are being considered by that compassionate Minister, Douglas Houghton, in his massive review of the social services. He honestly expressed his disappointment in the House this week about the impossibility of introducing a guaranteed minimum income during the present session. But if universal benefits are not to be available, at least some lifelines must be thrown out. Above all, there must be, whichever party is in power, a break from the sacred cows of insurance principles, the sickening " nicely calculated less or more " of stamps on a card, the collectively imposed disadvantages of contribution failures for which a casualty (especially a wife) may not be blameworthy.

THE DILEMMA

THIS IS the real dilemma. Whether the future of the welfare services should depend on a stamp-counting, actuarial approach or whether, as in the field of education, there should be a universality of provision. All the political parties can compete in an auction of generosity. But in honesty and probity the argument must be carried further. In practice, it cannot be unrelated to a positive policy for the redistribution of the wealth of the country.

The questions range wide and the debates in Parliament this week have been thoughtful. But while we go from group to group, seeking to help now here, now there, the alcoholic, the wanderer, the deserted, the diminished in mind or body, there can be a danger of producing another patchwork. And finding again that there are holes in the quilt. The good intentions of the wage-related benefits, for instance, might even exacerbate the difficulties of the lowest paid. The minimum income guarantee has had to be sadly postponed.

But in a society which gets its priorities right it cannot wait for long. Why shouldn't that sick ex-teacher's paralysed wife yet find " some dreams attainable " ? She deserves her dreams more than most of us. So does he.

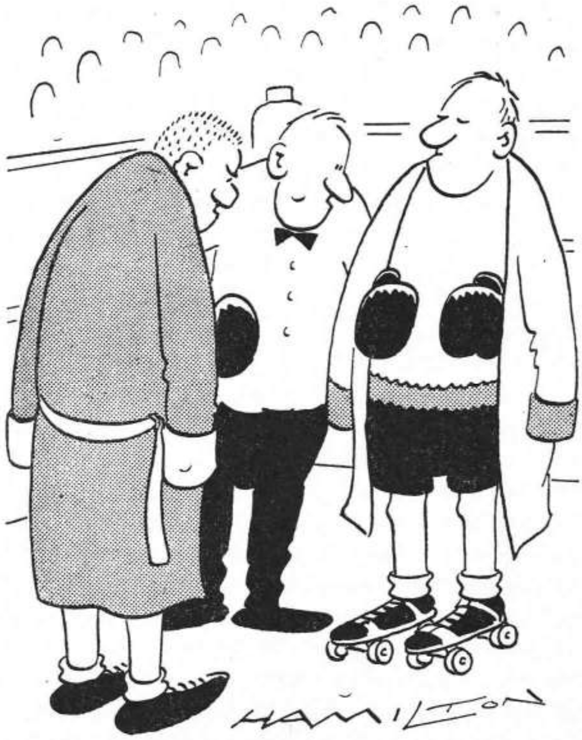
" *This article first appeared in* The Guardian *on 12th November, 1965 and is reprinted by kind permission of the author and the Editor of* The Guardian."

BRIEF REPORT OF A
MEETING

Held at Church House, Westminster S.W.1
on Monday, 25 October 1965
Chairman — Sir George Haynes

The Meeting was opened by **Field-Marshal Lord Harding,** who apologised for not being able to stay for the whole afternoon but extended a warm welcome to everybody present. He explained that, although it might surprise some people that an organisation such as the National Fund for Research into Poliomyelitis and Other Crippling Diseases, which was of course concerned with research, had convened a meeting to discuss a purely welfare matter, in his experience it was often difficult to see where research ended and rehabilitation or welfare began. Indeed, as some of those present might know, Sir George Haynes and he were at the present time involved in a joint exercise which they hoped would lead to less duplication. Today's meeting was another effort to turn overlapping into dovetailing and he wished the meeting well in its discussions.

Sir George Haynes thanked the Field-Marshal and Mr. Duncan Guthrie for taking the initiative in convening the meeting. Sir George said that the number of people present was evidence of the amount of interest in the matter and he had recognised several friends, especially some from Scotland, who would, he knew, make valuable contributions. A certain number of papers had already been circulated but some of the authors might wish to elaborate on them. He would waste no more time but call on Mr. Duncan Guthrie to explain the background to today's meeting.



Mr. Duncan Guthrie described how he had visited the flats at Hans Knudsenplatz in Copenhagen several years ago. He had been so impressed with them that he had hoped they could be copied in this country. For those who did not know of these flats, of which the majority are for ambulant disabled, men or women who lead a normal life but need little extra space for wheel chairs or other special facilities, and some fourteen are for severely disabled, chiefly respiratory polio cases. The feature which impressed him most was that the able-bodied spouse, or the able-bodied parent or child, was enabled to look after the disabled member of the family and he could see no reason why the British Government should not make it possible in this country too. On his return from Denmark he reported to his Council who instructed him to examine the possibilities of initiating a similar scheme in the United Kingdom. He also reported on the project to the Central Council for the Disabled, who were extremely sympathetic and promised to support any negotiations.

Mr. Duncan Guthrie explained that he soon realised that housing of this kind was useless if people could not afford to live in it, as was the case at present. He had been discouraged by official platitudes but recently he had become aware of a spreading interest in the subject. He described it as an ' Alice through the Looking-glass ' situation. Seriously disabled people were being obliged to live in hospital although he could think of no group in the community who should more obviously be living at home within the family circle. The hospital did not want them, preferring to be able to use their limited number of beds for patients they could cure, discharge and replace with other patients whom they could cure and discharge in their turn, rather than have them occupied by long-term disabled for whom they could do nothing but provide custodial care. " Curiouser and curiouser," said Mr. Duncan Guthrie, " it would be vastly more economic if arrangements were made to enable these people to live with their families rather than be cared for in State institutions of any kind." He hoped that the present meeting could result in some joint effort which could present a common approach to the Government. Mr. Duncan Guthrie ended by saying, " We should do everything we can to enable those people in whom we are interested and in whose welfare we are concerned, to live at home. We should remember that we are helping nobody if we segregate people, because of their disability, from the rest of society. All we would be doing would be setting up ghettoes for the disabled. What we must do is integrate them, so that they can live with their families, next door to their able-bodied neighbours, so that families do not break up and that family life, which is, I am sure, the most important part of our civilisation and the culture we know today, can continue in every sense.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Duncan Guthrie and threw the meeting open.

Mr. Dickson, Chairman of the Chelsea Labour Party Committee for the Chronic Sick, said that his committee was not as political as it sounded but its objects had support in every Regional Hospital Board area except one and their resolution had been carried at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party. Mr. Dickson pointed out that, from the statistics which had been circulated, it was clear that different regional boards institutionalised their chronic sick in different ways but all were agreed that, where medically possible, the right place for the young was in their homes.

He pointed out the absurdity of the situation where the allowance for a disabled person who is able to live at home was £4 a week, while the cost in hospital was £45. He mentioned the phrase, referred to in the memorandum of the Scottish Council of Social Service—" differentiation of the scale." He asked how, in the name of social justice, could there fairly be any differentiation between industrial and non-industrial injury.

Mr. Dickson asked what scale the Scottish Council of Social Service had in mind when it asked for an allowance in lieu of constant attendance. His view was that in London it could not be less than £15 per week.

He pointed out that the number of young chronic sick was unknown, the only figures available being for those in geriatric units and contractual beds. It was hoped it would be possible to obtain the necessary information through the local authorities, not forgetting the District Nurses, and through the voluntary societies.

It was no use providing homes for the disabled if they cannot live in them. In many cases breakdowns resulted from the intolerable strain of continual nursing and it was wrong to say that suitable personnel could not be recruited.

' Medical home helps ' could be found if they had the right training and status, including appropriate salaries, pension rights, etc. The number needed would be greatly reduced if relatives or friends could undertake these jobs.

There are 1,644 housing authorities in England and Scotland. It would be unrealistic to expect all of them to understand the problems of the young chronic sick. It was essential to be able to say to every local authority, whether or not it had any social conscience itself, " This is the number of young chronic sick in your area. These are their requirements." He wondered how many local authorities knew of the short document S4/64 of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. This set out the architectural requirements for basic accommodation for bedridden patients at rents to be kept within the breadwinner's capacity to pay. As he himself wheeled his wife round the shops and to the local, he thought of the other wives, lonely and miserable in geriatric wards, because their husbands did not have the cash that he had.

Mr. Dickson said, " As a Socialist, I am pledged to right what we consider a basic social injustice. We understand charity in its true, Pauline sense of love. We are our brothers' keepers, in the humility of the knowledge that in God's eyes they are probably more important than we are."

The Chairman thanked Mr. Dickson for his most moving contribution.

Mrs. Elaine Swift, Kent Association for the Disabled, said that last year her authority housed a young chronic sick boy by extending the ground floor of a new house so that it provided a suitable self-contained unit for him. But there was another side. She told the story of a young paraplegic woman who on discharge from Stoke Mandeville was housed in entirely unsuitable accommodation, without a downstairs toilet. The local authority did not do more than adapt the old, familiar accommodation, putting a toilet in the bathroom and charging an extra 2s. a week rent. The girl developed bed sores and later, because of the medical aspects of the case, had to return to hospital in order to have a kidney removed. It seemed quite possible that what led to the loss of the first kidney could well lead to the loss of the second. It might sound dramatic to say that the local authority was deliberately killing someone but she believed this was true. It was, she felt, reasonable and not expensive for all local authorities to provide housing tailored to fit these people. All housing authorities should consider this and the provision of special housing in new developments their primary duties. We should make this part of our programme.

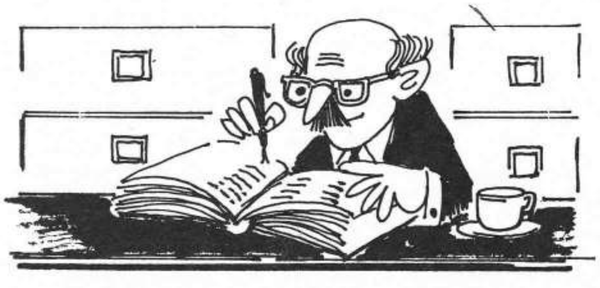
Mrs. Megan Du Boisson said that she would like to introduce the Disablement Incomes Group (DIG). The Group had been requested to send a deputation to meet the Minister of Pensions and a representative of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to discuss the memorandum which the meeting already had, thanks to Mr. Guthrie circulating it. Mrs. Du Boisson asked any organisation which had useful information to send it to her.

Mrs. Stacey, National Welfare Officer of the British Polio Fellowship, said that she had been a social worker with a local authority. She wished to give her own views and to support what the British Polio Fellowship had done before she joined it.

When she joined the Fellowship she could not understand why there was any need to make a fuss about something which was accepted, however inadequately, by the local authority she had served with. Today's meeting was called " Housing the Severely Disabled." It did not matter what things were called ; what was essential was that there was someone to look after the disabled person in his or her home. Mrs. Stacey said this was a problem that had haunted medical social workers for twenty years and the answer was to be found in the Ministry of Health. The trouble lay in the permissive powers laid on the local authority. With these powers each local authority should solve the problems according to the district. She had found no difficulty in obtaining constant attendance allowance in industrial areas where a neighbour or an old mother would be the home help ; in residential areas, where neighbours or relatives did not provide home helps, it is not always possible to get the constant attendance. Thus each local authority interpreted its permissive powers itself.

Instead of producing lists of people who need constant attendance, we should look to the local authorities to acknowledge their responsibility for the care of the disabled, and their powers under the National Health Act. Some local authorities have said to Central Government that the magnitude of the problem is too much for the local authorities.

Mr. Dickson had asked that voluntary organisations and district nurses should produce figures, but these would not be good statistics and of course we must claim for all disabled and not just those in certain groups like polio, muscular dystrophy and so on. The Welfare Department of the local authority is supposed to produce a register of the disabled.



The next point Mrs. Stacey made was that if enough pressure had been put on local authorities, by now they would have protested to the Government that the care of the disabled was beyond their resources and the Government would have had to take it over. The next thing was uniformity for all who required constant attendance. We all had looked at Service allowances and knew that other people much more handicapped were getting nothing or practically nothing. Choice was also important. If individuals were given cash they could employ those whom they knew and got on with, recruiting this man-power from sources which would not affect others.

Mrs. Stacey summed up by saying that if sufficient, justified pressure had been exerted by those entrusted with the welfare of the disabled, the present system would have been forced to breaking point a long time ago. " It is not a problem that is insoluble, but a problem that the Government has not faced up to adequately. It is for us, through the right approach, to show the Government the way to tackle this problem."

Mr. Bentley said that if there were sixty people in the room there were probably sixty different indications of what was wrong. Some people would say it was Government's fault, some the local authorities', and so on. The Government, when questions are asked, can pass them on to somebody else, perhaps to another minister. Meanwhile disabled people live on borrowed time. Mr. Guthrie has got to the hard core of this problem—how to jump the queue. He has plans for dovetailing all the experience in this room and bringing new pressure on the Government. Twenty years ago a senior official of the Ministry of Health said to me, " Never forget that in a democracy you only get things by persistent pressure on the Government from all sorts of quarters, and it should be trained, guided and disciplined pressure."

Dr. Browning, Scottish Council of Social Service, pointed out that the Scottish Council had representatives of every body in Scotland concerned with the disabled. The problem, in his view, was one of legislation and, as grants were made on a basis of need, there were bound to be anomalies. Fifteen years ago at Glasgow University it had been suggested that it was time that there was no longer a distinction between disablement arising out of industrial accidents and that from any other cause. We must now decide where it was the legislation was at fault and where the law was being badly interpreted or carried out. It was essential, in his view, that the need of each individual should be easily assessed and this assessment presented to the authorities so that the needs of each disabled person could be met. The basic principles were very simple ; their execution was, however, likely to be complex.

Mr. Bowstead, Scottish Council of Social Service, said in reply to a question by Mr. Dickson that their memorandum had purposely omitted to give a maximum allowance figure as this should depend on medical assessment. The other point he wanted to make was that he represented the Edinburgh Committee for the Co-ordination of Services for the Disabled who, although established only in 1963, had prepared a register of all the disabled in Edinburgh showing the disability and needs of each person. It was also advocating the most effective use of houses specially suitable for the old and the disabled. In reply to a question from the **Chairman, Mr. Bowstead** explained that the Edinburgh Crippled Aid Society had, for the first time, acted as agent for the Edinburgh Corporation. All the voluntary bodies in and around Edinburgh were represented in the Society.

Mr. A. C. Waine, Multiple Sclerosis Society, reminded the meeting that approximately 50 per cent of all young chronic sick within the country suffered from multiple sclerosis. His Society appointed a special committee to examine this subject three months ago and the meeting could be assured of his society's full support.

Mrs. Victor Percival, North Cotswold Crippled Aid Association, recounted her experiences with a disabled woman on a constant breathing aid who asked to live in her own house. The problem was financial but she had found the local authority most helpful. The full statutory amount of £330 a year was provided and the Association arranged for the staff. Due to the exacting nature of the work their experience was that staff had to be changed about once a year. Grants were provided by the husband's firm and by the firm which employed the woman when she first left school. There was no National Assistance. In her experience there was in this country, while we were waiting for new legislation, a wealth of sources which could be called upon for help and she recommended that people should keep on the right side of the local authority.

Miss Steele, Disabled Living Activities Group, had had a different experience when she worked in Bermondsey. The disabled in a poorer area such as this were very numerous and as the powers of the local authority are permissive and not statutory, the amount of help is limited.

Mr. Bowstead thought he was right in saying that the local authority was bound to maintain a register of disabled but there was no obligation on the disabled or his relatives to register.

Mrs. Du Boisson said that disablement was a form of early retirement.

Miss Warburton (?) pointed out that since 1949 it has been compulsory for the local authority to provide services for the physically handicapped under Section 29 of the National Assistance Act. The great difficulty was that services could not be provided unless a person asked for them and most physically handicapped are not prepared to register.

Miss Baker, National Assistance Board, said that N A B now had 450 offices in England, Wales and Scotland, where information could be obtained on financial aid for the mentally or physically handicapped. Various leaflets were also available. The Board's officers were sympathetic and understanding and pleased to explain what could be claimed.

The Hon. Mrs. Wedgewood, British Polio Fellowship, asked whether the problem was not greater for those who were earning rather than those at National Assistance level. If a man earning £20 a week was spending £15 a week for help for his wife he was at starvation level. This man got no consideration at all, not even for Income Tax.

Mrs. Du Boisson asked if she was right in thinking that there was no provision at all for a totally disabled wife.

Miss Baker agreed that this was so and said that it was written into the National Assistance Act. A general view of the social services was being undertaken at the present moment.

Mr. Auld, Aberdeen Association of Social Services, explained that in Aberdeen there was a committee representing the different groups of the disabled. A campaign for higher allowances had met with indifferent success. Replies from the Minister of Pensions and the Chairman of the N A B showed clearly that the Government's view was that everyone's need could be satisfied under the existing system and what could not be provided by the Ministry of Pensions could be provided by the N A B. He also referred to the comprehensive review of the social security schemes being undertaken by the Government—and, he believed, by the Opposition—and suggested that now was the time to press for reform.

Mr. D. Powell, British Polio Fellowship, told the meeting that his Society had carried out a survey through its membership and had been able to present facts to the Minister. The Minister however had replied that the local authorities' powers were permissive and the difficulty was the availability of resources, especially man-power. The BPF felt that pressure should be brought to bear on the local authorities who would then ask Parliament to produce a uniform method of dealing with the problem.

The Chairman asked what the next step should be. There had been differences of opinion expressed but all were agreed that radical changes had to be made. The present meeting was entirely ad hoc, the initiative being taken by Mr. Guthrie and the National Fund for Research into Poliomyelitis and Other Crippling Diseases, but there were several influential organisations represented and it might be useful to set up a working party to reflect on what had been said.

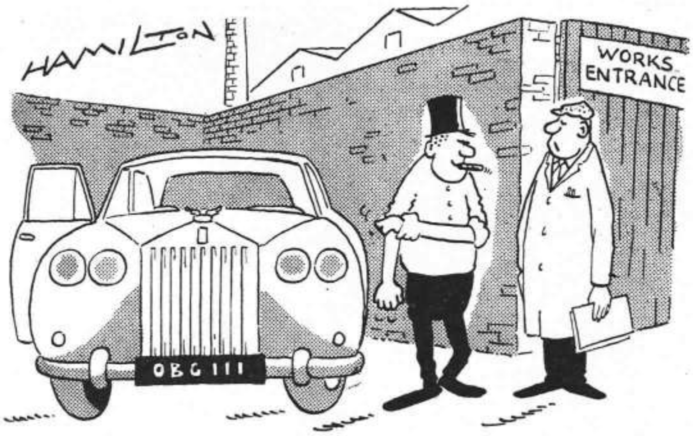
The Hon. John Astor, M.P., said that, although he was not connected with any organisation represented at the meeting, he had a great interest in the problem. It was clear that everybody wanted to go in the same direction and he would like formally to move that **this meeting set up a working party to prepare a statement based on today's meeting, so that a meeting could be sought with the appropriate Minister or Ministers.**

Mrs. Swift seconded the resolution.

The Chairman pointed out that if such a working party were to be set up it should be responsible to some body. **Mr. Duncan Guthrie** said that he could provide secretarial help but that he felt the working party should be responsible to the Central Council for the Disabled. This was generally acceptable and the resolution was unanimously carried.

The Chairman, in closing the meeting, thanked Mr. Duncan Guthrie for his initiative in convening the meeting and a vote of thanks to Sir George Haynes for presiding over the meeting was proposed from the floor and passed with acclamation.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED



" I suppose now you've won a packet on the Pools you've come to ask me for a bit of time off ".

One of the major pieces of social legislation in this country came of age in 1965. It is the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 and its stated purpose was " to make further and better provision for enabling persons handicapped by disablement to secure employment or work on their own account." The Act makes special provisions for the disabled in several ways but for the purpose of this short article for *Responaut* we will concern ourselves only with those items which have particular application to the more severely disabled. These would probably be (a) the disabled persons Register ; (b) sheltered employment ; (c) aids to employment and (d) training.

At every Employment Exchange of the Ministry of Labour there is an officer known as the DRO (Disablement Resettlement Officer) who is responsible for the resettlement of the disabled. His special duties include advising disabled persons and helping them to obtain suitable work, and any disabled person can get in touch with him at the local Employment Exchange and be sure of his help and advice.

A register of disabled persons is maintained at each Employment Exchange and some special employment provisions of the Act apply only to those disabled persons who are registered, but other services by the DRO—advice, assistance with finding suitable employments, training, etc.—are available to the non-registered disabled. Registration is voluntary but for an application to be successful certain conditions must be satisfied. So far as " responauts " are concerned probably the most important would be " that he has a reasonable prospect of obtaining and keeping some form of remunerative employment." Let me repeat that advice and assistance can still be given even when this condition is not satisfied and the applicant fails to qualify for registration.

Some disabled people, who are unlikely to hold employment under ordinary industrial conditions because of the nature or severity of their disablement, are capable of useful remunerative work if given more sheltered employment conditions. Such employment is provided in various ways. A non-profit making Company —now known as Remploy Ltd.—was set up by the Minister of Labour in 1945 for the purpose. The Company has 89 factories in different parts of the country which employ nearly 7,000 severely disabled persons on production of articles for the ordinary commercial market and on contract work for industry and the Government. The Company also operates a very limited " homework " scheme based on some of its factories, to employ severely disabled persons who are unable, because of distance or disability, to travel to work.

Many local authorities have set up sheltered workshops for the blind and other severely disabled persons and the Ministry of Labour provides financial assistance to local authorities and voluntary organisations which run approved workshops.

Special aids to employment may be supplied on loan to enable severely disabled persons to take up employment or work on their own account. These include special items of Braille equipment for the blind, special purpose seats for attaching to machines, special drawing boards, etc., and tool kits for use by home workers. Applications for aids to employment of any kind will be considered.

Courses of industrial rehabilitation, and training in about 80 different trades are also available. More than half of these are provided in Government Training Centres and Residential Colleges for the Disabled, and the remainder in employers' establishments but only the less severely affected responauts would be able to take advantage of these facilities.

If you feel that any of these services provided by the Ministry of Labour could be of use, then I would suggest that you should get in touch with the DRO at your nearest Employment Exchange and you will be given all possible assistance, advice and information.

G. D. R. O.

WEAKNESS IS MY STRENGTH

ANN ARMSTRONG

Published by kind permission of the Editor of the Evening Post, Reading

Responauts . . . that is the name for a new group of people who, because of disease or injury, have to depend on an electrically driven respirator for the very breath of life. They are now beginning to make medical history by living outside hospital walls. I am a responaut.

It must seem strange to you that I am a journalist although, literally, I cannot lift a finger. How can a person who can never leave her bed, who cannot even live without a mass of complex machinery to carry on that prime function of life, breathing, a function that her own body refuses to do, how can such a person possibly succeed in the highly competitive and high-speed world of modern journalism ?

The truth is that my weakness is also my strength. I see the world from a completely different angle from anyone else, and because of this I feel that I have something to bring to journalism that no-one else has. A journalist is first of all an observer and this is what I am . . . looking out at the world while not being immersed in it.

In a way I and my fellow responauts are rather like astronauts or cosmonauts. They also would be helpless out there in space without a complicated mass of machinery to help them to breathe and eat and live. They, too, live in a little world of their own and look down on the big world below from a unique viewpoint . . . and find it beautiful, as I do. Remember what Yuri Gagarin said during that first manned space flight ?

The astronauts' removal to outer space not only increased their awareness and appreciation of the world they had left behind, and which continued to support them while they were in orbit, but showed them that out there in those vast, endless oceans of space the most important space was the one between their ears. The body is for housing the mind and the spirit. As long as these are lively there is almost nothing that cannot be overcome. So why shouldn't I be a journalist ?

The contents of an astronaut's tiny cabin must provide for all his daily needs in a limited area. I share his problem, for my room, too, must serve many purposes. I am anchored to my respirator and my telephone. So my room is bathroom, bedroom, living-room, kitchen and office to meet the needs of each moment as it arrives.

My air-line and my telephone to the outside world must be constantly maintained. These are my main essentials. But I have one other gift that helps me with my journalism . . . a bread-poultice quality which draws out the deep feelings of the people who come to see me.

By all the rules, I should be in hospital . . . permanently. But I prefer to take a chance and live, and work, at home. I am one of a very small band of people prepared to do this. In a way we responauts are pioneers adventuring into a new world, into a way of life no-one has tried before.

We get a lot of satisfaction from trying to help others in the same predicament . . . but we are learning invaluable lessons ourselves. The most important is that none of us can be truly independent : we all need one another in so many different ways. And I have learned too that I love the world that was designed for my living and could cheerfully stay here a million years.

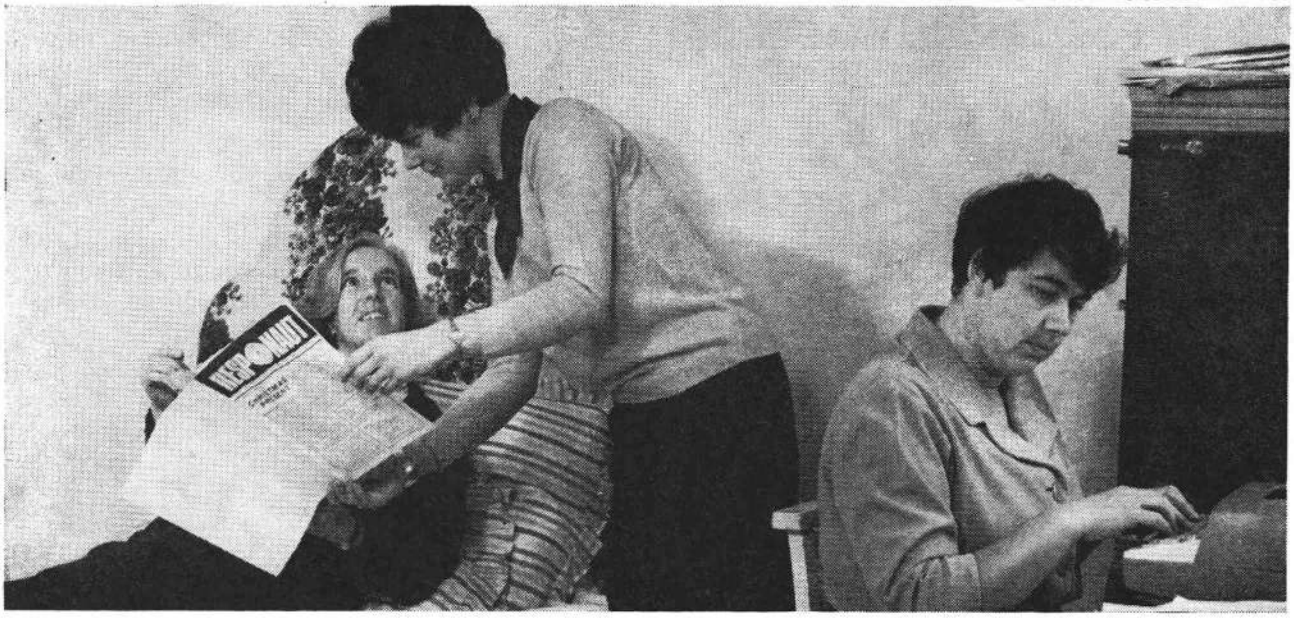
D.I.G.

(The Disablement Income Group)

needs telling

Responaut readers don't need to be told that incapacity through chronic sickness and disablement leads to a very expensive way of life ; and generally speaking the greater the degree of incapacity the greater the expense. Now DIG invites help from you and from your friends : in the strictest confidence.

As a result of the long meeting of DIG's delegation with the Minister of Pensions, Miss Margaret Herbison, and with Mr. Douglas Houghton, who is currently reviewing the country's social security provisions, we realised we must engage in a two-way process of education : the chronic sick and those who care for them are educating us as to their social and economic needs ; and DIG in turn must educate the public, so that never again can the public say " Oh, I didn't know . . ." Hitherto, the Disabled Population (D.P.—appropriate initials) have not spoken with a single voice as to their economic situation. (Let's not be mealy-mouthed, let's say poverty when we



Working in DIG's office, complete with very necessary bed, Beryl Moore *(standing)*, Megan DuBoisson *(lying)* co-founders of DIG and Ann Edwards—secretary.

mean poverty). But now, with 1,000 correspondents, DIG is beginning to see a pattern emerging. If a family has no private money, then a crippling disease or a sudden severely disabling accident can plunge them into poverty of Dickensian gloom.

A family of six live in such conditions that the mother, suffering from m.s. and severely paralysed, has no bed and sleeps on a living room couch, because the four young children need the bedroom (" they're growing, you see "). The father has had to leave his work and is paid by the Council as a home help for some hours a day (3s. 10d. per hour in most counties). Thus he cannot draw National Assistance and, of course, he has no money coming in on behalf of his wife who, as a full time mother, could never have been insured under N.H.I. for sickness or disability, and can never ever draw N.A. because she's married. (They are included amongst some of the families living in dire poverty through disablement, described by Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend in " The Poor and the Poorest.")

There *is* a solution today : a final solution. The wife could go to hospital, the children into the care of foster homes or the L.A. The husband could then go back to work. But this close and loving family would have been broken. And the cost to the public could be about £60 per week.

The Responaut's Editor knows all about living from hand to mouth through disablement (ironic phrase !). Do you know about it, too ?

DIG is working for *the recognition of severe disablement as a category of being, and for special provision to be made for it as such :* i.e. A National Disablement Income for ALL severely incapacitated persons, irrespective of the cause of disablement. Such a category is recognised for Service or for Industrial Injury Disability Pensions : but a disabled person is a disabled person. The geography and circumstance of their disablement is irrelevant. The extent of their incapacity (above one-third) and the burden of dependants upon them must be considered for supplementary allowances.

Responaut readers are known for their bright approach to life ; to living and not just existing. They know what it means to have the chance of choice : and to lack that choice. In homes and in ' Homes,' the National Disability Income for which DIG is fighting would mean a degree of independence for us ; some now in institutions might live at home or with friends or in a suitable private house if they could contribute a sensible amount to their keep : in any case, the Income would be theirs as of right. (Thirty-four per cent of the chronic sick could leave hospital if suitable help were available*.)

Responaut readers, please tell us : educate us : and we shall speak for you whenever we can. Following our talk with the Ministers, we are now to meet, by invitation, their Shadows in Opposition.

DIG has no voice but that of the Disabled Population : give us your advice in confidence. We need the education only you can give us and we shall continue to work to educate at every opportunity government and the general public as to the economic need of the D.P.

Write to the address below ; either to ask us or to tell us. We are a National Organisation and we speak to the nation.

D.I.G., Godalming, Surrey.

Megan DuBoisson (Mrs.) (co-founder).

* *Oxford Regional Hospital Board Survey 1963,* (*Chelsea L.P. National Young Chronic Sick Campaign 1965*).

POST

N. C. J. EDITOR SAYS . . .

I like it ! Congratulations on a splendid production ! I feel sure you are now heading for great things, and your aim to make the lives of " responauts " as normal as possible is sure to be achieved.

Len Tasker,
30 Thistley Field,
Coundon, Coventry.

QUALIFIED TO SPEAK

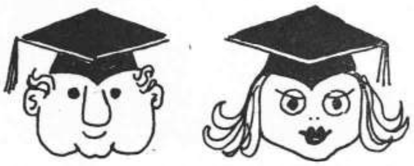
Leon Watts has suggested that I give you my views on Education and Employment. Up to the end of 1965 I was Co-Principal of Hephaistos School (also Co-Founder) which specialises in the education of the intelligent severely disabled boy. Leon said that I had more experience than he has. This I doubt ; because, though disabled, I am not a responaut—but does the disability or its severity matter ? In my opinion it does not. A will to live, a positive desire to make something of one's life ; that is what matters. We may be dependent entirely on others, our life span may be short—but is that any reason to deprive a person of education and employment or the chance to lead as full a life as possible ?

Leon is not the only responaut at Hephaistos School. Nigel Day, aged 10, is also there. He joined the School in October 1965 having had a chequered career at Priorsdean and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre. The School copes with these boys and, as far as possible, encourages them to cope for themselves and make something of their lives. (Life could be easier for Nigel who has a tracheotomy if he had a sucker which could run off the 12-volt battery of his electrically propelled wheelchair.)

Employment will always be a problem but given suitable education and the creation of a suitable organising body there is no reason why work should not be done at home. Translating, reviewing, reading for a publisher, research—to name only four jobs that could be done from home.

Leading a full social life depends so much on temperament and the needs of each individual. However it is so necessary if one is to lead a full life.

As I see it the disabled person should have the right to have the chance to lead a full life. Rights have to be fought for, and the first step is to abolish the policy of segregating the disabled. Segregation is all right for those who do not want to make something of their lives (in fact they have the right to be sheltered) ; but it is an abomination to those who do. In the minds of so many people disablement and shelter go hand in hand ; and with shelter goes segregation. A disabled person is better for struggling, for fighting, for competing. All we want is the chance to make something of our lives. Down with segregation ! Let us kick the bottoms of those who lack faith in us, shut doors in our faces and deprive us of the right to equal opportunity.



For the record, my wife and I want shortly to open a school which will specialise in getting the severely disabled boy or girl back to an ordinary environment. At the same time—and only as a temporary measure until the universities and colleges of further education see the light—we would like to act as lodgings for the severely disabled who need more attention than the university or college can offer. Our aim will be to see that such students lead as full a life as possible within the university or college. We also have in mind a holiday home for the severely disabled which will cater for the mind as much as the stomach.

David Atterbury, M.A. (Cantab.),
Virginia Cottage, Farley Hill, Reading.

FIFTEEN YEARS

I should like to thank you very much indeed for sending me your most interesting magazine *The Responaut*. I am fortunate enough to need a breathing aid only when I get a cold now and haven't needed one for the past fifteen months and am, of course, hoping this winter will pass without the usual coughs and sneezes—or the faces that signify I'm coughing !

As you will see from the address I am no longer living in St. Benedict's Hospital, but am now in the outside world again with two marvellous friends who attend to the necessary chores that need doing for folk who have no use in their arms. You can no doubt imagine what it feels like to be living in a " home " again after fifteen years of hospital routine. Excellent as most of these hospitals are it's not quite like home ! I thought I was serving " a lifer " so it just goes to show—never give up hope.

I guess you have no need of anyone to help with envelope addressing or other typing, and anyway it probably wouldn't be worth the time and money to send it out, but if I could help in any way I would be more than willing to do so.

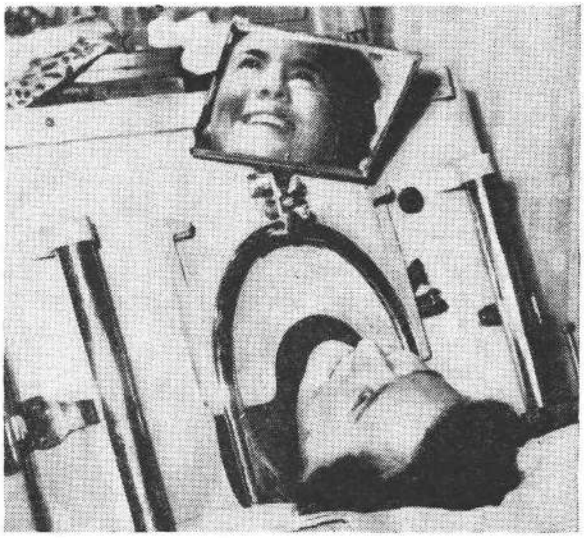
Vera Dench,
149 Mellison Road,
Tooting, S.W.17.

AND THE LIGHT SHONE ALL AROUND

I must congratulate you on the new *Responaut* and, also, of your recent publicity in the *Daily Mirror*. I received the cutting from about six different sources and everyone wanted to know if I knew you, so I was able to receive reflected glory.

Paul Bates,
The Coppice, Tower Hill,
Horsham.

MARGARET OF SELSEY



The sumptuous January issue came as such a wonderful surprise and I was delighted to discover later that the *Daily Mirror* had assumed the identity of Father Christmas, in agreeing to print and distribute The Responaut. Len Tasker, of The National Cripples' Journal, sent the article with your happy picture, and it was

"Oh no, our secretary hasn't got a new hairstyle, it's been like that since she first saw all those letters from the Daily Mirror readers".

lovely to read about you and to learn of our secret benefactor.

I was so glad to see the pictures of some of the fine people concerned with the old-style Responaut, but I know everyone would be disappointed that you did not include a photograph of yourself.

The weeks before Christmas were particularly frantic, especially the two days when we were invaded by television film units. Our tiny cottage was not designed to meet the curious needs of television, and you can probably imagine the confusion created by film cameramen, sound recordists, lighting technicians, interviewers and their paraphernalia, all squeezed into this small room. Eventually, one interviewer retreated to the bathroom to compose his introduction in peace ! The interviews were such an ordeal, as I was so nervous and self-conscious, but I was very grateful to be given the opportunity of mentioning the problems of many of us which could be resolved if only a Constant Attendance Allowance were available, and I was also able to add that this would make it possible for more hospital patients to live at home. As a result of this remark, Mrs. Du Boisson, co-founder of the Disablement Income Group, was interviewed a few days later by the B.B.C., and described the aims of the organisation. I was considerably ruffled when asked, without any previous notice, if I had evolved any personal philosophy and I would be most interested to know how you would have reacted to this question.

The programmes were transmitted in the south of England only, and it was a very disconcerting experience altogether, although, in retrospect, great fun !

The B.B.C. interviewer, David Wain, told me he lived near you and had met you when he was a newspaper reporter, and he sent his good wishes.

My most exciting news is that the Selsey Residents Association, and other friends decided to provide me with a Diesel-powered generator, which will automatically take over whenever there is an electricity failure ! It is perfectly marvellous and I still have difficulty in believing it, even though a most precious piece of ironmongery is already reposing in the garden, awaiting a shed and connection. We previously had no emergency power supply, but we were able to call on the local Fire Brigade if the hand pumping of my respirator became too much for my parents. Often I could manage to breathe by myself, but I rely entirely on my respirator if I have a cold or cough, or am overtired, and the peace of mind this wonderful gift has brought is indescribable. For more than fifteen years we had accepted that it was technically, as well as financially, impossible to have a standby set, but this machine was located by a new and dear friend of ours, who is a Professor of Engineering. Unfortunately it is disturbingly expensive, costing more than £300 ; however, if anyone in a Both Respirator would like details of the generating plant, I would be only too happy to pass on any information.

Another amazing discovery was made by Mrs. Stacey, the B.P.F. Welfare Officer, who advised us that we were probably eligible for a Home Help, when she heard that I was going to use a newly awarded pension of fifteen shillings a week in paying for some domestic help. It had never occurred to us that we were entitled to this service, and I do hope no one else is struggling as we were, unaware that the local authority may be able to help. Our own Area Home Help Organiser has arranged for someone to come in for six hours a week, and we are all benefiting enormously by this.

Margaret Dixon
Pinks Cottage, Selsey, Chichester

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

I hope you don't mind me writing to you like this, but I saw your photo in the *Daily Mirror* the other day and it seemed as though I was sitting there beside you again. You see we were together at the Wingfield Hospital at Headington, Oxford. I heard your broadcast on Woman's Hour some time ago and recognized your voice.

I am better than I was when I first came home ; I sit in a wheelchair all day now. I can't get my arms up at all but, as you can see, I can write, thank God. My left hand is useless but I can manage lots of little things, like sewing and embroidery work, and there's plenty of sewing and mending with three growing girls : do you remember them coming to see me ? The eldest is twelve now and the others eleven and ten.

Do you ever see or hear from any of the others, Audrey Willis, Peggy Slade, Eileen Monger or Jean Heathcote ? We often talk of you all here at home, as I collected lots of photographs of all the patients and staff.

Dorothy Connelly, 447 London Road,
Chantry, Ipswich.

A VIEW TO REMEMBER

Did you manage to go on holiday this year ? We went to Newquay with the Portsmouth Polios. What a lovely part of the country the south-west is. I had never been so far into Cornwall before. The hotel was excellent and most accommodating ; we nearly all had " rooms with a view " !

I must congratulate you on *The Responaut*. It is an excellent production and I am sure an awful lot of background work goes into it before you " go to press." As I guess everyone else says, the day it arrives everything stops ! You are doing a great job in bringing us all closer together and I find it helps a lot during difficult times to remember that I am not the only one struggling to live normally ! I wish you every success with future editions.

Audrey Willis, 6 Abbott Close,
Basingstoke.

A FEW TO REMEMBER

Thank you for " fabulous " copy of new *Responaut*. Many congratulations on your huge success of *Daily Mirror* " taking over " publication of our book and also bringing it to the public's eye with their centre two page " splash."

We both feel 1965 will be a year to be remembered and at last we are on the way to becoming known and the nagging fear of reaching the stage of " The forgotten Few " is out of sight.

Our aim for 1966 must be for a Constant Attendance Allowance to enable our fellow responauts to leave hospital and live at home as a family as God so intended, and also lighten the burden of those of us already at home.

I thank God that I have a devoted and loving husband and family, without whose care I could not be at home. A Constant Attendance Allowance would certainly lighten my husband's load.

Jean Heathcote, 3 Broomfield Lane,
Lymington.

FRIEND IN DEVON

The *Mirror* story on your wonderful effort in living makes me very guilty and disgusted with myself for my lack of effort I have three children and little money so cannot donate money for your cause but can I do anything else in a way to raise funds ? Do you collect paper, etc. or can I do anything else. I have *time* ! and would help if any of your fellow sufferers are in this area.

Mary Westaway, Arden House,
Union Road, Crediton.

THE BEST MEDICINE

I am a freelance cartoonist drawing cartoons for such as *Daily Mirror*, *Reveille*, etc. Having read the *Mirror* article I would like to help out if I can. If the publications of *The Responaut* should require any cartoons I would be happy to draw them free of charge at any time. This offer holds good indefinitely.

Raymond Hamilton, 72 Connor Crescent,
Whitegate, Wrexham.

REJOICE—A RESPO FOUND

I read the article about you in the *Daily Mirror*. I am a male district nurse and I visit a patient daily who is virtually in the same situation as yourself.

He is not confined to bed, but like you he is a responaut. He is suffering from motor neurone disease and relies on his respirator and sucker.

I gave him your address in order that he write for more information about your magazine *The Responaut*. He said he would rather I write on his behalf as you would not be able to read his writing which, I agree, is rather difficult.

D. J. Ross, S.R.N., R.F.N.,
19 Wickford Drive, Harold Hill, Romford.

AND ANOTHER

I was advised to contact you to put me on your mailing list for *The Responaut* by Dr. Sandiford, when I stayed at the Lantern polio caravan at Portsmouth in June of last year. Dr. Sandiford gave me your address but I am afraid I lost it on the journey home so I was pleased to see your article in the *Daily Mirror*.

I have had respiratory polio since 1962 but I am now living at home, using a positive pressure respiratory pump (Radcliffe). I go by ambulance to hospital once a week for a new " tracky " tube, but apart from that I don't get out much, so I would very much like you to send me *The Responaut* in case I am missing anything of interest in the respiratory line.

May I wish you further success with your magazine.

Stan Wheeler,
31 Reynolds Avenue, Chadwell Heath,
Romford.

MYASTHENIA GRAVIS

I was very interested in the article in the Nursing Times entitled *The Responauts*.

I have been nursing a patient who has had myasthenia gravis for the past five years and I would be most grateful if you would send me a copy of your magazine.

Mrs. P. Westwood,
123 Merritt's Hill, Northfield, Birmingham, 31

ANYONE WHO HAS A HEART

First of all I would like to congratulate you for the wonderful work you are doing through *The Responaut* : I am sure you have the full support of all respiratory polios in your scheme. I would like to thank you for sending me the copies of the magazine and am enclosing a small donation towards the cost of postage.

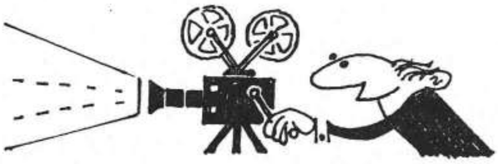
We were so pleased to see the article about you in the *Daily Mirror*, and to read the good news that they are going to print the magazine for you.

I wholeheartedly agree with you, you do tend to rot after a few years in hospital. I have had polio nearly six years now, and guess I am luckier than some as I have a wonderful husband who comes and takes me home for weekends, and for days when he is not on duty and can look after me. He would willingly have me living at home all the time if we could possibly afford someone to look after me while he is working, but at the moment we just can't do that, and I have to spend the time in hospital. We are keeping our fingers crossed that your scheme will work out and so enable all respos to live at home with their families and to lead as normal a life as possible.

Wendy Cornford, J. Ward, Priorsdean
Hospital, Milton Road, Portsmouth.

ACTIVE TOWNSWOMAN

Since the last *Responaut* was issued I have heard from Mr. Len Tasker of the Enterprise Club, Coventry, who edits the National Cripples Journal. He sent me two copies of the Journal (with a very interesting article by a responaut—Kathy Crowhurst, who has had a holiday in the N.C.J.O. Holiday Bungalow at Chapel St. Leonards, Lincs.). He tells me he can give a talk and film show and I am wondering if I could arrange an evening for the Guild members, and possibly a few guests from other Guilds in the Federation, and also show your film ; in which case I should be glad of your tape.



We thought of you during the power cuts, and hope that you did not have too many bad moments.

Joan Souper,
6 Wheathill Close, Leamington Spa.

FRIEND FINDING

I am indeed very grateful to be added to your mailing list for your *Responaut* magazine and enclose a small donation.

You can imagine how thrilled I was when on being given your magazine for the first time to read (Vol. 2 No. 1) there were three letters in it written by friends I had made when in hospital.

In particular the letter which pleased me most was the one written by Ray Wright, 'Happy and Helpful Traveller,' as five years ago Ray used to daydream about the many pieces of equipment which he now has acquired.

When writing about your magazine to another of my polio friends who uses a cuirass sometimes at night, she wrote asking me where she could get a copy. I am wondering if you could add her name to your list.

My admiration goes out to all you responauts and I can fully appreciate your problems, although I only qualify for having needed respiratory aid for a few weeks, but the memories are still there.

Why, even in your New Year edition there is a letter from yet another of my friends. How nice it is through *The Responaut* to have news of friends made but not forgotten.

I certainly can understand John Prestwich requesting the pages to be made more easily to turn as I have seen him (some five years ago) wait patiently five or ten minutes before anybody has come past to turn the page of some long story he was reading.

Looking forward to receiving your next edition.

I happened to be in a mixed ward in hospital and was the only woman amongst the many men, hence the friends of the opposite sex.

Vivien Hayes,
26 The Highlands, Potters Bar.

DETERMINED TO WORK

The new look *Responaut* is something to be proud of, I hope we can keep it alive.

I wish all the readers a Happy New Year.

I am now fully established again with my firm as an engineering draughtsman drawing small details at home. The inspiration for this came to me from another polio friend (of 1951 vintage) when I was permanently on my back. I have just completed my sixth year as a responaut. My first three years were spent in hospitals. During my third year I tried to start drawing. It was quite a task. My intentions were hampered by a doctor. He tried to make me do without suction when I had a trachy. Well, that's another story.

I could not get very far with drawing that

year, but I must mention the good intentions of the staff, also the time needed for this drawing of mine was far beyond the time any hospital could spare. I came home at the end of '62 and have not looked back since, thanks to my wonderful wife.

My first big problem was compass work. I had tried using a pair given to me by my friend, the top was altered to a ring to fit my finger. I could lift this quite well and to enable me to twist the compass a disc was fitted horizontally below the finger hold.

For about eighteen months I was limited to the smallest size drawing (10 by 7 in.). I had my drawing board frame extended to allow the board to move sideways for longer drawings but I could not lean forward for the taller ones. This was overcome by fixing a roller at the top and bottom of the board which revolves to and fro. This enables me to draw four sizes up to 15 by 20 in. The band is operated by hand but I hope to have it fitted to a motor very shortly. I am still progressing with my work and there are still a lot of problems to be solved. I use my natural left hand with a sling, I find a sling the best method. I manage about 35 hours a week now.

I enjoy fairly good health, but I had a setback a year ago. My doctor discovered I had diabetes. I spent three weeks in hospital, no injections or tablets now, just a diet. The one thing I fear is the cold—don't we all.

If any information on my drawing board is required I would be pleased to oblige.

Ray Wright
20 The Oval, Sidcup, Kent.

JOYFUL TRAVELLERS

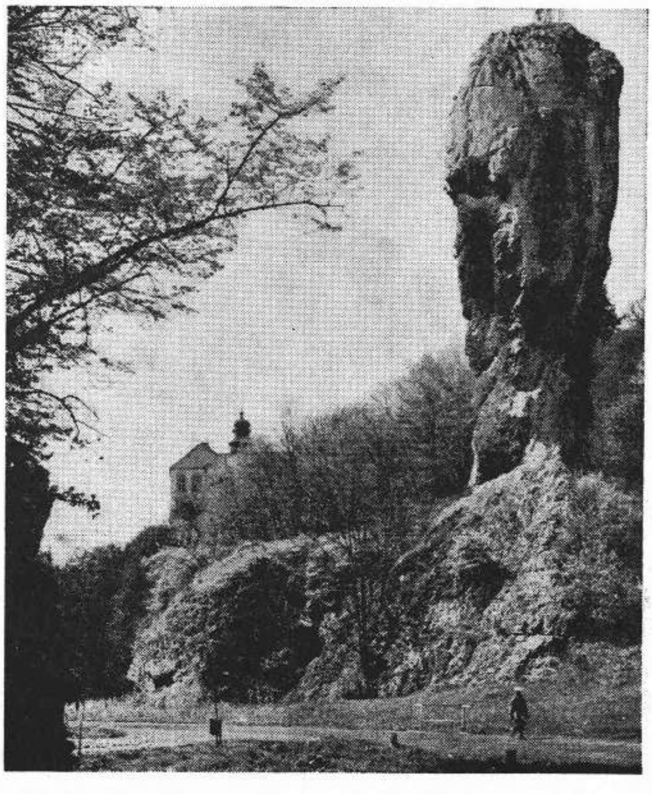
Further to the article of my wife about holidays in Poland which you printed I am glad to advise you that we have got the first enquiry about lending the coach.

We have also got news of the piece of equipment which was missing so far. Apparently there is a transformer to take in current from 12 volt car battery and give output mains 240 volts current of continuous strength 500 watts, and even instantaneous 900 watts. They assure me that the equipment is reliable. It is made by Vibro-Supply, 57 Fortess Road, N.W.5. This means that the cuirass pump, or even iron lung pump, can be operated from car battery. It means, furthermore, that one battery should give more than nine hours work. The cost of the transformer is £63, and delivery lag 3-4 weeks. The battery would be re-charged by the Chorehorse or similar.

Of course we shall let you know more about the new transformer once we have used it. At present we wanted to give you the news as there may be other responauts like my wife who would like the news and have not got it. Even EDA (Electricity Development Association) in London did not know of such a transformer when we wrote to them in June 1965.

I enclose a picture of the beauty district in Poland. It is near Krakow. There are canyons going through a valley in which the most important village is Ojcow. This is a National Park. In the Park there is a piece of rock called Staff of Hercules (or Club of Hercules). You will now understand why we should like to visit Poland again.

W. and P. Markiewicz
24 Lynton Avenue, Northampton.



BLESSINGS

I do rejoice on your success in bringing *The Responaut* to ink in print : what lies behind that simple phrase.

In your little movement as you repeat the pattern that was Galilee you have now passed from Galilee to Rome, ever like to cherish with longing the days in the land where the hills were green—an amaranthe in all our minds.

When you become an Act of Parliament how much the more I will rejoice. You personally will not be the act but your cause will be the beneficiary. And how fine. As I have several times used your *Guardian* article as church reading—ever appreciative of the white light it created, the silence it deepened. I will sometime use Remembrance. You did well and discreetly to print this.

I trust you find your weekly stint of ink not too strenuous : or able to set it aside when it comes so.

The Rev. Magnus Ratter,
24 Brookland Hill, London, N.W.11.

GOLDEN SISTER

Very many thanks indeed for another ' golden' copy of *Responaut*.

Sister W. Turner,
General Hospital, Hexham.

ADVISERS ON EDUCATION

You asked whether my husband, John, and I would be advisers on education. Yes, we will and do print our names to this effect.

Constance Saville,
152 Westbourne Avenue, Hull.

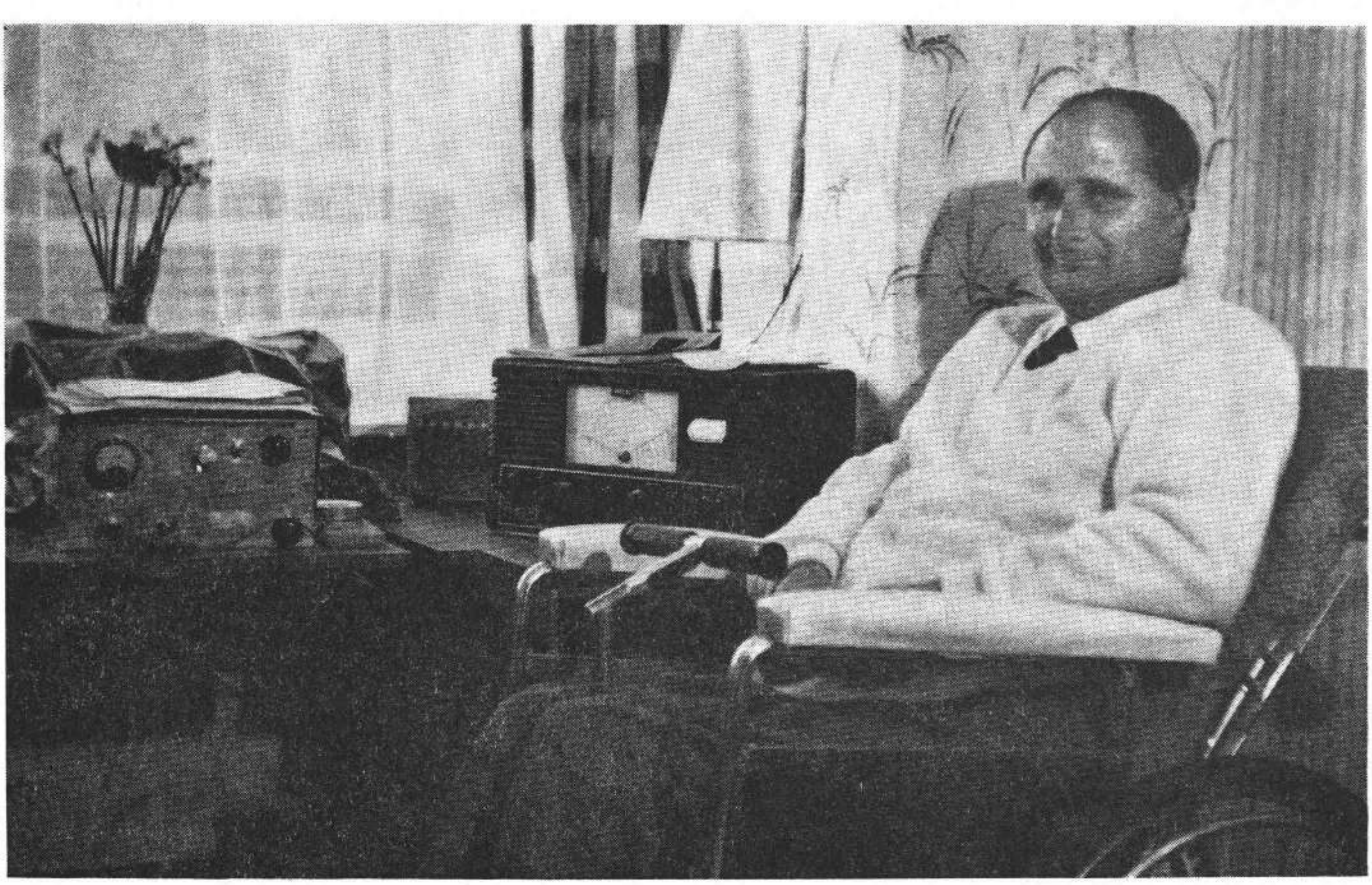
PLUS CA CHANGE

I have just received my copy of the new *Responaut* and I felt that I must write and congratulate you all on the fine job that has been made of it. I am very proud that my article was in the first edition of this great magazine and I will try to contribute more if you require them.

There is one thing that I must tell you, that unfortunately, since I wrote the article Frances Woolley, the secretary of the R.A.I.B.C., has moved and the address was wrong. (New address : Mrs. Frances Woolley, 331 Wigan Lane, Wigan).

What do you think about the new allowances for sick people ? I don't know what, if any, extra allowances have been made for Constant Attendance and Unemployability, all that was stated was that consideration had been made but all enquiries I made to local NH offices brought no information at all.

Ken Eddy,
29 Longfield Lane, Cheshunt.



COMMON O.T.

Thank you for sending me *The Responaut* which I enjoy reading very much. Although we have never met I feel I know you as I also had Inky Stevens as my O.T. and she often spoke of you.

The article in the *Daily Mirror* was very interesting and I am pleased you will be receiving more help with *The Responaut* in future.

Jean Owen
33 Jenkins Road, Rugby

O.T'S HIEROGLYPHICS

Seems it's high time I put pen to paper, though it would give me even more pleasure to drop in and have a natter. That's not to be for a while—at least until the climate is more reliable.

How are things at your end? I imagine that cosy house makes all the difference to the winter days.

I gave Mr. C. the two copies of *Responaut*. He is just on the verge of setting up a D.I.G. In fact I attended the meeting mentioned in the enclosed cuttings. At the meeting he quoted you and one other passage from *Responaut*. I had only given him the copies some hours before so he must have perused them immediately. Did you perchance hear Mrs. Du Boisson at 11.35 this morning on the radio—I do hope the whole idea gains momentum as the set up is so ludicrous at present.

. . . I must quote from a Welfare Officer's letter to me. " Thank you for your report, etc. etc. I am having great difficulty in understanding your writing—please slow down ! It took me ten minutes to discover that Mr. A. did not need new Ferrets but new ferrules : What a mistake we could have made ! "

Inky Stevens
Cwmbran, Monmouthshire

PHYLLIS WORKING

I was so thrilled to see you in the *Daily Mirror*, and how wonderful that they have taken over publication of *Responaut*. That's a step in the right direction. Thank you so much for the December edition which certainly is very posh—I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it and it really is wonderful to be able to turn over pages myself. I charged straight through it and was very disappointed to get to the end.

I had a lovely week at Christmas at home with my family but the time just flew. I'm sorry that I haven't sent anything up to *The Responaut* lately but I am quite lost without my typewriter which has given up the ghost and has now been in the shop over two months waiting for a part. Anyway I promise you a long epistle when it comes back.

I am expecting the first papers of a Social Science Course to come this week. It took me just months and months to find a suitable course.

Phyllis Downing
The Grove, East Carleton, Norwich

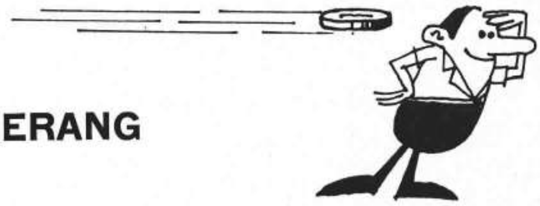
HOLIDAY BUNGALOW

I'm sorry for the delay in replying to your letter asking for photos of my stay at the holiday bungalow. Unfortunately our photos are coloured so I had a black and white print taken.

Now, heartiest congratulations (and good wishes) on your new edition of *The Responaut* (even though I didn't get in it !). It is a great achievement and must surely be a big step towards bringing your hopes and aims into the public eye. May you be given strength to carry this thing through.

One of the nurses brought a *Daily Mirror* in and I was thrilled to meet you in its centre pages. No wonder you were excited at Father Christmas's gift in undertaking the printing and despatch of *The Responaut*. I'm so glad this help and encouragement has come to you and again wish you all the best in your undertaking.

Kathy Crowhurst
Ward 6, West Hendon Hospital, N.W.9



BOOMERANG TAPE

How can I ever thank you enough or tell you how much your tape with our daughter's voice on meant to Harry, Michael and myself. It is the biggest thrill we have had for many a long day. Only a mother, and a very wonderful mother, could have thought of such a lovely gift to send to parents who are thousands of miles away from their girl. How thrilled we were to hear all your news—so interesting—and to hear you talking to us as clearly as if you were in our room.

Feo Keightley,
Tugun, Queensland, Australia.

TASMANIAN FRIEND

Though you don't know me I feel I must write and tell you how much I, and I know so many others, have been inspired since reading about you in the *Melbourne Herald.* The story of the courage that has come into your life occupied half the page and was headed 'Ann did the Impossible!' and it really has the flavour of the miracles that happened amongst ordinary people in the days of The Early Church. I have been re-reading Catherine Marshall's *Beyond Ourselves* and she shows how so often we have to reach the point of helplessness before we feel the need of knowing God personally and are willing to claim His creative power as you have done—so often we have to reach 'rock bottom' before we realise how much more is added to our lives when we are willing to let Him express an outgoing love through each one of us. It is so lovely to know you have the love of a family and the teamwork amongst all your friends with the contribution they are making to your work. My husband and I have now reached the mellow age of retirement and we live on the banks of the Derwent River, about five miles out of the city. Unfortunately we have no family but that does not keep us from having the reflected glory of our friends' children. On the whole we keep busy and have outside interests which keep us from getting into a rut.

Way back in my youth I did my general nursing training so I understand fully the miracle of rising above self-pity ; and you cannot estimate what you are contributing to other lives.

Gwen McInnis,
Lindisfarne, Hobart, Tasmania.

NEW ZEALAND ENQUIRY

I was interested to read of the respos' equipment in an article recently and would be glad to have further information. It may be that you have already had enquiries from organisations in New Zealand. If not I think it might well be of interest to some out here.

Lady Fergusson,
New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND TRAGEDY

I am indeed most interested in your two copies of *The Responaut*. The first copy came to me while I was in Wanganui Hospital, at the time lying seriously ill as the result of a very tragic bus accident. I will tell you briefly.

We have a very active group of some three hundred women who belong to a Floral Art Club and on the 16th July twenty-nine of us were going by bus to see a Floral Display arranged by another two clubs. This display was to be put on in the old homestead of two very loved people, namely Sir Thomas and Lady Duncan of Hunterville, both now deceased. The reason I mention this point is these two dear people gave the first homestead to be used as a Treatment Hospital for Polio victims some years ago. I don't think they could treat patients with such disabilities as your own though. Here I strayed because I thought this little item might interest you.

So . . . back to that terrible day, the 16th July ; we all set off to view this display of beauty portrayed in flowers in the background of this lovely home, but about seven miles from our destination the bus crashed, the brakes and gears having failed. Five of our friends died instantly, four were seriously injured (I was in that group), others not serious and a few just bruised and shocked. However, two others and myself are still having treatment but we are all now on the way to recovery.

When I think of people like yourself I feel very humble and say a prayer of thankfulness that we were fortunate enough to come back to almost normal health. I think you are a very wonderful person ; it was only when I had read through your first *Responaut* quarterly that I realised you were the Editor and, of course, responsible for my getting the copy.

I am going to post your latest copy to one of my friends who is having treatment through the bus accident, at The Duncan Home.

Dorothea Robinson,
Levin, New Zealand.

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