

Letter from Home

The British Home in California, Ltd.



“What is the Ingathering?”

“An opportunity to visit the British Home in Sierra Madre, have a guided tour and enjoy an afternoon tea party” was the reply. So, as I had not visited the Home before, I decided to go along to my

picture of how the Home worked. As I sat on the lawn with my DBE friends eating delicious sandwiches and cakes on a beautiful day I thought, “What more could one ask for?”



first Ingathering. The tour of the Home was both enjoyable and informative. From then on, when DBE members referred to Armstrong Hall or Braemar Cottage I knew where and what they were talking about. I met some of the residents of the Home who helped serve cups of tea and I began to get a rough

Well, I wanted to find out why this day was called the Ingathering when it resembled a tea party? Several long-time DBE members told me that it had begun as more of a ‘gathering in’. It was a day when DBE members brought gifts to the Home to stock the pantry shelves and the linen cupboard.

By searching through

scrapbooks at the Home, I discovered an article written in the British Empire Digest dated October 1938. There it was described as a time honored thank you party given by the British Old People’s Home. ‘On the first Saturday in December the guests at this pleasant retreat receive their friends and well wishers and express their gratitude for the interest and support given during the past year.’ This also provided ‘an opportunity for all British people to remember their less fortunate countrymen and to bring generous donations to replenish the Home pantry. Gifts of canned goods and preserves are especially welcome.’ The following year, 1939, the item about the Ingathering was rather cutely titled “Shower for Old People”.

We must remember that the British Home

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Forthcoming Events:

- November 7th
Ingathering
- April 16th, 2011
Home AGM and Luncheon

opened in the early years of the Great Depression. The support of the DBE as well as other British and Commonwealth based groups was essential to its survival. In fact, the Home was able to enlarge

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Irene Silver - Director

Born on Friday, November 13, 1942 in Oxford, England, Irene is the eldest of three girls. When she was a child, the family moved to Bromley, Kent, where she grew up. On September 26, 1962, she married Ron Silver



and afterward moved to Biggin Hill, Kent, where daughter Jacqueline (a DBE member) was welcomed on October 7, 1963. In 1966, Irene and Ron moved to Kirkintilloch, Scotland, where second daughter, Wendy (also a DBE member), was born on July 23, 1967.

Five years later, Ron received a job offer in the United States and the family moved to Atlanta, Georgia. After transfers to New Jersey and Chicago, they left behind the 60-below wind chill winters for the west coast where Ron had been offered a new job in 1978. They have been at home in Aloha, Oregon, ever since although they enjoy spending most weekends at their second home at the Oregon

coast. With both daughters married, Ron and Irene are the proud grandparents of Tyler (15) and Mario (8), step grandparents of Shelley and Shannon, and step great grandparents to Mage (3), Skyleer (18 months) and one due in November, 2010. They also have two grandcats, two granddogs and their own

thoroughly spoiled cat, Benny. Employed in the insurance industry for 22 years, Irene enjoys a flexible schedule and a supportive, wonderful boss (Mike). She has plenty of time to dedicate to her duties as the Oregon DBE State President, especially with the support and help of her husband Ron who has been retired for five years. Irene has been a DBE member since 1981, first as a member of the, now dis-

banded, Bronte Chapter and currently as an active member of the Robin Hood Chapter along with former Bronte member, Pat Boundy.

The Robin Hood Chapter is well known for its annual Car Rally fundraiser which marked its 16th year in 2010. Pat, Irene and their husbands run the event each year. Irene currently serves as the vice-regent for the Robin Hood Chapter and has previously served as a Regent, Treasurer and Recording Secretary. In addition, she has been on the State Board since 2000 where she served for six years as the Standard Bearer and four years as Recording Secretary. She believes that this has prepared her well for her current position as State President.

Irene attended her first National Convention in Long Beach, California, in May, 2007, as a delegate from Oregon. She hopes that everyone has a chance to attend at least one convention. She says it has made her want to stay involved with the DBE.



Shirley Wilson - Resident

Shirley was born in Lachine, Quebec, Canada. She was the only child of parents who emigrated from the U.K., her mother from Nottinghamshire and her father from Shirley, Southampton. Hence the name - Shirley.



Shirley attended St. Anne's Academy for girls and she was valedictorian at her graduation as well as recipient of the Governor General's medal for highest scholastic standing. Shirley went on to attend Sir George Williams College in Montreal. During this period she worked at a book store. Books have been Shirley's first love followed by skiing and ice skating.

After college, Shirley accepted the position of Secretary to the President of the Canadian International Paper Company which was the largest paper company in the world. She enjoyed meeting all the publishers of the newspapers in both the U.S. and Canada.

During a summer vacation, Shirley met her future husband, Robert Wilson. Following a two year courtship, they married in August, 1948. The year 2010 marks their sixty-second wedding anniversary. Bob and Shirley have two children, a son, Scott, and a daughter, Jill.

The Wilson family has lived in Monrovia for over forty-nine years. Shirley and Bob have always loved to travel on vacation, whether it be driving across the country or cruising by ship. Shirley also loves music and enjoys the sounds of the Big Band era. Her favorite performers include Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Ethel Mer- man.

For sixty-seven years now, Shirley has worked for "The Cause". She first joined the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) in Quebec when she was seventeen and helped raise scholarship money for the disadvantaged children of the Inuit Indians.

In 1953, Shirley and Bob moved from Canada to the United States where they bought their second home in Springfield, Pennsylvania. During this eight year period Shirley joined the Southern Cross Chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire. In 1961 Bob had a job transfer to California. Shirley continued her volunteer work through the Princess Anne Chapter of the DBE in Monrovia and then extended this work to the British Home. Shirley is most grateful to all the members of DBE and

the Home who have made her life so happy over the years. The DBE ladies became not only close friends but "family"; two DBE members were Godparents to her children.

For the past sixty-five years, Shirley believes that the DBE has enriched her life; she appreciates the many friendships developed and special memories shared. She reminisces on the countless fundraising events including the June Faire, Ingathering Tea, Bunko Parties, Theater Parties, Residents' Birthday and Christmas Dinners, and luncheons at the British Consul-General's home.



Shirley always believed each event to be a rewarding success. She also acknowledges the privilege of being elected to all positions in her Chapter as well as each position on the Home's Executive Board and eventually six years as British Home President (1980-1982 and 1990-1994), the most rewarding of all.

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Animal Education



On October 12th the residents gathered in the main lounge with a little fearful anticipation of 'Sydney's Legacy', an animal education program named after a bearded dragon lizard. Rachel Komulainen put on a great show for the better understanding and increased compassion for the animals with which we share this planet.

Some of the animals Rachel brought with her were Charlotte, a rose-haired tarantula, Shackleton, a female Savannah monitor lizard and a variety of reptiles. We all developed a better understanding of the animals in our ecosystem; by the end, Connie, who's terrified of

snakes, managed to pet Cleopatra, the female ball python!



"What is the Ingathering?" continued

in the depression years to meet the increasing need for its services because of its dedicated supporters.

The Ingathering continued to be an annual event right through the war years and beyond. A newspaper clipping from 1948 states 'Several hundred Daughters of the British Empire are expected to attend the annual 'thank you party' at the British Old People's Home in Sierra Madre tomorrow. The occasion will be an 'Ingathering for the Pantry shelf' as the Home is extremely dependent on friends and the Daughters for support.'

At some point during the 1950's or 60's the date of the Ingathering was pushed back to the first Sunday in November and that

remains the same today. The Home has become more financially stable and so the gathering in of food and linen to stock the cupboards is no longer required.

However, it is still an occasion when the Executive Home Board and the Residents can show their gratitude to those who provide support through volunteering, the Friends Circle and fund raising.

Today the Ingathering is more like an Open House when members of the DBE and friends of the Home are welcome to take a tour, visit with the Residents and enjoy a delicious tea served on the lawns.

Mary Beadle



Residents' Birthday Party



On October 28th, our Residents attended their annual birthday dinner at the Beckham Grill,

Pasadena. We were delighted that most residents could attend, including 101 year old, Nell Parks.