

# HASTINGS WAR BRIDES GRATEFUL TO BRITISH WOMEN'S CLUB

Hundreds of English war brides in Hastings and district are grateful to the vision of Mrs. Malcolm Mason, Havelock North, convener seven years ago of the British Women's Club. They acknowledged their founder at a birthday party in Hastings recently.

In the first post-war years, there were problems enough for newly-arrived brides—a main one was housing—but their adjustment to new conditions was eased by the practical kindness of foundation members of the British Women's Club, many of them First World War brides.

They helped with temporary accommodation, getting a young woman from boat to maternity hospital, and encouraging new arrivals to join the club to make friends.

For young brides who felt their isolation, there was a feeling of security in friendships with these older women. "It was always a comfort to see the older women look so settled and prosperous, and to know that what had happened to them would happen again to us," said a former war bride, and now mother of three young children, yesterday.

Although the primary purpose of the newly-formed club was to welcome war brides from England, Scotland and the overseas Dominions, it had other roles. British-born women already in the district were entitled to join; and today new settlers from overseas get an equally warm welcome.

The question was asked recently, "Has the club fulfilled its mission?" But its value to adopted New Zealanders was seen at the seventh birthday party. Among the guests were two women just arrived from England. And Englishwomen from throughout the Hastings district were present for that warm contact with other people from "home."

## Future Work

"The club still has an important role," said Mrs. J. Sunley, a member of the executive. "We hope to give future arrivals as much help as we have received over the past few years."

These women, now the "old-comers," in helping the "new-comers" are fostering those ideals of friendship which inspired nearly 200 women who attended the public meeting convened by Mrs. Mason in 1946 to form the club.

At least 100 Second World War brides have cause to be grateful to the British Women's Club. Well over 100 children were born to them in the first few years after their arrival, and club membership is again increasing as these women have more time to meet at the monthly social gatherings, held alternatively in the afternoon and evening.

The British Women's Club had its origin in a letter to the editor of the Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune written by Mrs. Mason, to gauge interest in its formation. The response was overwhelming. Within a fortnight 21 controversial letters were published.

The result was a well-attended public meeting and the formation of the club. Mrs. Mason retired as president after three years.

The executive elected at the annual meeting in March is: President, Mrs. F. H. Hayes; secretary, Mrs. J. Sunley; treasurer, Mrs. L. H. Wainscott. There is a committee of 14.



# British Women's Club

## Coronation Meeting

With the Coronation only a few days off thoughts of members at the May meeting of the British Women's Overseas Club naturally turned towards "Dome." A portrait of the Queen was prominently displayed, and the room was decorated with flowers and ribbons of red, white and blue. A display of souvenirs of the 1937 Coronation was also featured with snapshots taken in London at that time by a member.

Entertainment included amusing competitions and songs of the British Empire were sung by six members of the committee and the president, Mrs. F. H. Hayes.

The BWOC meets once a month, alternately in the evening and afternoon of the fourth Wednesday. Evening meetings are held at the Old Folks' Association Rooms and afternoon meetings at the Buffalo Hall.

New arrivals from Britain are welcome at meetings of the club, which exists to give help and friendship to women from the Old Country.

# Annual Social of British Women's Overseas Club

A large gathering of members, husbands and friends attended the annual social of the British Women's Overseas Club in the Buffalo Hall, Hastings.

The president, Mrs. F. H. Hayes, introduced artists.

Two plays were "Daughters of Invention," by the Murdoch Road Kindergarten Mothers' Club and "Murder by Proxy," by the Mahora Kindergarten Mothers' Club. Mrs. Wainscott was accompanist for Mrs. Harbottle and Mrs. Pirie, who each sang two songs. Edward Hayes, son of the president, also sang.

A member, Mrs. Franklin, recited two monologues. A novel feature of the entertainment was a quiz conducted by Mrs. Wainscott in which four members' husbands took part. They were Messrs. Wilson, Graham, Mardon and Snell, the winner being Mr. Wilson.