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1940

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE  
IN A YEAR OF WAR, 1939-40

THE  
Sixth Annual Report

OF  
The South Wales and Monmouthshire  
Council of Social Service  
(INCORPORATED)

THE SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE  
COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

(INCORPORATED)

*Affiliated with the National Council of Social Service.*

*Patron :*

HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

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## FOREWORD

The need for economy and the demands of the hour make it inadvisable, if not impossible, for the Sixth Annual Report of the Council of Social Service to be published in the usual form. There is, however, so much good work to be recorded about which so little is known, that the Committee felt it unwise to dispense with a report altogether. The Council has long laboured under the difficulty that social service has been interpreted in South Wales as exclusively "something to do with the unemployed." It is hoped that this report, which sets out to be no more than a brief catalogue, will for all time disprove this assumption and yet, at the same time, disprove the equally false assumption that there is, in war time, nothing to be done for the unemployed. The year of the war has presented the Council with many new demands which it has tried to face, without at the same time neglecting those people for whose welfare it has had a special responsibility in the last seven years.

We present a record of an organisation that has sought in the last year to adapt itself to new needs without ignoring old ones, and has had to do this with a decreased staff and a decreased income. It is a record of which the Council is proud and one which we believe contains solid foundations for wider co-operation and wiser service, not alone in the years of struggle, but still more in the generations of reconstruction.

### UNEMPLOYMENT.

There are still, in October, 1940, 40,000 persons registered as wholly unemployed in the region. While this is an unprecedented and unexpected decrease on the previous years, it is not all that was hoped for before the collapse of France, nor is it, in its attenuation, a negligible human problem. In pre-war days unemployment was so much the major burden of the community, so much the focus point of the politician, the press and public sympathy, that even if the unemployed man believed himself hard treated, he had no sense of being altogether forgotten. With the coming of war and the whole re-orientation of the country's problems and the great increase in employment, the problems of unemployment became the interest, not now of the nation, but merely of a Department. Greater tragedies, more urgent needs and more immediate demands have very properly monopolised that public concern and

practical sympathy which, for so many years, was given to the Special Areas. No criticism whatever is implied in this statement, but the Council knows that the unemployment of a few in a time of war is a greater personal tragedy for that few than the unemployment of many in time of peace. Life is more expensive and more trying, while to be out of work, not when many of one's fellows are, but when the demand for labour is at its height, gives a greater sense of frustration and uselessness than men of eagerness and loyalty can sustain. A survey recently made showed that there were 176 Social Service Clubs for men still active in South Wales. Their total membership is 15,825, of whom 10,609 are without work. Among them is a large number whose advancing years, immobility and lack of training make their prospects of employment as remote as ever. They have accepted with astonishing fortitude the back seat that is inevitably theirs in the State at war. The Council has felt, however, a continuing sense of responsibility for them. Their need for fellowship, for education and recreation is as great as ever, and their demand for opportunities to serve their community is insistent. So long as the Council and its officers can help them to achieve this, it will gladly share the back seat with them.

#### WOMEN'S CLUBS.

The survey referred to revealed that there are now 275 Women's Clubs active in the region with a total membership of 14,265, of whom 6,802 are dependents of unemployed persons. To tell the full story of the war time activities of these Clubs is impossible. They have contributed to Comforts Funds; they are organising Mothers' Clubs for the women evacuated into their valleys; indeed they are in many ways the driving force in communities that in days of black-out and restricted travelling must depend more and more upon themselves. It should be recorded too, that they have, between them, made 2,703 garments for the Central Hospital Supply Service.

#### EMPLOYMENT.

Employment in Wales has increased by many thousands in the last year. That in itself is not remarkable, but the increase is involving the employment of women, most of whom are having their first experience of insurable occupation. This is remarkable in Wales where hitherto there has been no tradition of female labour. Even before the establishment of the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Council was concerned about the many social problems that were bound to follow this unprecedented extension, both in range and sex, of the labour demand. In the Workmen's Institutes of the South Wales Coalfield, and the operations of the Miners' Welfare Fund, there

is a tried and proven machine which can meet with an unequalled adequacy the problems of the working *man*. The Council, therefore, confined itself to the problems of the working woman.

It was felt that the bias of social provision in this new direction should, in so far as it concerned voluntary service, be in the direction of recreation. Proud as it is of the great achievements and service of its Women's Clubs, the Council did not feel that they, as a general rule, would provide the ideal basis for meeting this new need. Women's work in South Wales in recent years has been based on poverty and unemployment and has aimed at thrift and material assistance, and the atmosphere so engendered might not inevitably provide the ideal recreative background for women now earning wages and seeking, in place of material assistance, relaxation from the rigours of unaccustomed labour. Accordingly the Council has discussed with Workmen's Institutes in various valleys the possibility of women workers being provided for, equally with men, in these embryonic Community Centres of South Wales. There is every hope and evidence that these negotiations will bear the desired fruit.

The appointment of Mr. Ivor Thomas as Divisional Welfare Officer of the Ministry of Labour, is warmly welcomed by the Council, and has materially improved its hopes of effective official action. In consultation with this new Department, the Council has planned the organisation of special reception centres for transferred workers and is planning, as far ahead as it can, for providing instruction and leadership in Workmen's Institutes and elsewhere for general recreational needs.

#### ADULT EDUCATION.

It is a significant characteristic of the people of South Wales that their demand for Adult Educational facilities has not been overwhelmed by war. Contrary to the Council's expectations the past winter produced as many classes and as high an average attendance as in several pre-war years. Adjustments have had to be made to the restrictions of black-out, long hours of work and difficulties of travel; but for the coming session the demand is constant, and while some of the major events of this work, such as the Three Valleys Festival will be impossible, there is a marked return of the small informal group meeting in parlour or vestry, which is at once the genesis and genius of this movement.

Special mention must be made of the fact that the Council's Committee for Drama has been recognised as the agent in Wales of the "Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts," and that, as the first result of this recognition, the Old Vic Company, led by Dame Sybil Thorndike and Mr. Lewis Casson, are touring the valleys with their presentation of "Macbeth."

This tour, which already shows the hallmark of complete success, has been made possible in a very large degree by the cordial and able co-operation of both the Committee and officers of the Miners' Welfare Fund.

#### CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAUX.

One of the important effects of war, with its multiplication of rules and regulations, has been the increase of personal problems and worries to which there is no ready answer. It was as vital to the preservation of morale as to the increase of efficiency that these problems should diminish by being solved rather than increase by being ignored. Accordingly, with the approval and financial assistance of the Ministry of Health, the Council commenced in the early days of the war the establishment of Citizens' Advice Bureaux and the training of Bureau workers, able and competent to deal sympathetically with the personal problems of their locality. There are now more than 70 of these Bureaux in the region all working in different ways towards the same end and dealing, between them, with some 3,000 enquiries per month. This service has provided new and welcome opportunities of co-operation, and the Council records with pleasure and gratitude the help and initiative of many organisations, and especially of Trades and Labour Councils and branches of the British Legion. The Council and Bureau workers are extremely proud of the privileges that this service has accorded them. They cannot all be enumerated, but amongst them has been that of acting as the agency for the communication of messages to relatives in enemy and enemy-occupied territory. Some 1,600 such messages have now been sent and many more are received each month. Further particulars of procedure may be had on application.

The Council has now arranged to provide competent persons to be stationed at Rest Centres, provided by Local Authorities in the region, who will be able to deal on the spot with the multifarious problems arising from air-raid damage to homes and belongings. In this connection the Council has prepared a pamphlet for the guidance of Bureaux, which it is hoped shortly to publish.

Finally, by a new plan approved by the Ministry of Health, the Council has undertaken to organise for the whole of Wales a Central Register of those who evacuate their homes consequent on air-raids. They hope, as a result, to be able to supply relatives with particulars of the well-being and present whereabouts of any who may be dishoused by enemy action. The co-operation of the public is urgently needed in this matter, and all those who evacuate their homes, *by private arrangement*, are asked to communicate with the Council.

## EVACUATION.

The evacuation programme of September, 1939, created problems for almost every kind of organisation in Wales. The Council found that school-children, who were in the majority, were quick to adjust themselves and easily assimilated, while such of their problems as remained were being adequately dealt with by the L.E.A.'s concerned and by their own teachers. Mothers and younger children, however, had problems which only voluntary service seemed able to meet. The establishment of play centres, sewing groups and Mothers' Clubs, and the smoothing over of many problems was a work which the Council undertook eagerly and busily in those early months of the war. Much experience was gained at that time which is proving an invaluable asset in these days when evacuation is a remedy rather than a precaution.

## REFUGEES.

The melancholy fate of the small countries of Europe in recent months resulted inevitably in the arrival in this country of large numbers of refugees of many nationalities. The Council has been happy to co-operate with the Welsh Board of Health and Local Authorities in their reception, and wishes to acknowledge in a particular manner the invaluable and indefatigable services rendered in this work by the small band of interpreters which was gathered together.

Concurrent with this work, the problem of existing refugees in this country became more acute, and the Council gladly agreed to act as the representative in Wales of the Refugee Children's Movement. The quite considerable work that has been involved is one that has been performed with the greatest pleasure.

## FOOD AND FEEDING.

No peace time activity of the Council has been more easily and eagerly adapted to crisis needs than that of its Homecraft Staff. The teaching of dietetics, the "learning to make do on the dole," had so prepared the women of the Clubs that war-time rationing has had little effect and laid but a minute burden upon their kitchen economy. Poverty in plenty had been at least as strict a rationer as the State in war. As a result of it, the women of the Clubs had gained in bitterness a wealth of experience which now they offer to everybody in eager understanding. With the co-operation of the Ministry of Food and L.E.A.'s, the Council has organised or taken part in Exhibitions, Lectures, and Demonstrations on the Kitchen Front and is, at the moment, conducting a series of experiments in communal feeding in various parts of the region. Perhaps most notable of all, the Council on behalf of these Homecraft classes, has

published a Recipe Book which is famous by now far beyond the region. Its sale has been phenomenal and its acceptance in so many official quarters a great encouragement.

#### CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION.

The unpreparedness of voluntary organisations in face of the crisis of 1938 resulted in a determined effort in succeeding months to remedy the deficiency. By the outbreak of war a Standing Conference of Welsh Voluntary Organisations had been brought into being, which set itself to ensure that the maximum effort should be put forth in time of war to ensure the greatest economy of voluntary service compatible with efficiency. The pooling of services for emergency work in an organisation known as Welsh Voluntary Organisations, was unanimously agreed upon. The Council is happy to report that, in South Wales, Welsh Voluntary Organisations has more than justified its establishment in a year of co-operative activity. Cross consultation at Committee meetings and elsewhere has obviated as much overlapping as it has produced new co-operation.

Its work, like that of the Council, has been materially assisted and enhanced by the decision of the then Lord Privy Seal to approve the appointment, by the National Council of Social Service, of Regional Liaison Officers for voluntary organisations to be attached to each Regional Commissioner for Civil Defence. The Council's Director was appointed to this office for South Wales and, while claiming but a negligible contribution to its work, he wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the evident sympathy of that office and the great cordiality both of Lord Portal and of Colonel Bruce, his successor as Regional Commissioner.

#### HEALTH SERVICES.

The Health Services Committee of the Council has been one of the most active in the past twelve months. It has now completed a scheme for the administration of the final grant for District Nursing assistance, so vital in these days, and is giving urgent attention to other problems that seem to come within its ambit.

#### RURAL WORK.

Evacuation and other movements of population have in some ways altered the balance of social work in the region to the extent that the rural areas are now faced, not only with their normal social problems, but with the very difficult problems that inevitably develop when the town dweller is transferred in large numbers to the country. The Council has kept in close touch with these problems, both through the work of Rural Community Councils and by direct action when necessary. Nothing has served to justify so much the development of rural social service in recent years as



the part this machinery has been able to play since the outbreak of war. Concurrent with this work, the Rural Industries Organiser attached to the Council has been devoting himself exclusively to the task of equipping and training blacksmiths to meet demands made upon them consequent on the intensification of the nation's agricultural programme. A survey and classification has been made of all blacksmiths in the region. At the moment classes are being conducted in oxy-acetylene welding for certain selected smiths.

#### NORTH WALES.

Regional planning has combined in recent months with national consciousness to require that Wales should be thought of as the unity and entity that it is. This has been true no less in social service than in any other sphere.

The appointment of Mr. Owen Parry as Regional Officer of the National Council of Social Service for North Wales fortunately preceded the war, but it soon became evident that even more was needed. The Council has accordingly seconded an officer to work in the Counties of Denbighshire and Flintshire, and is pleased to report the establishment of County Social Service Committees in these two counties and the initiation of a great deal of important work.

This must suffice in present circumstances as an attempt to prove that the Council, in the first year of war, has sought to play its part in meeting the demands of Armageddon, while not forgetting its responsibility to those to whom it has a first loyalty. It has sought to adapt its old work and to develop new work as the needs of the day have directed. And most of all, it has sought to do this without losing its identity or its philosophy.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

While a small Emergency Committee was appointed on the outbreak of war, the full Committee has met each quarter during the year to receive reports both from its officers and its Emergency Committee.

Space will only allow the briefest reference to the acquisition of two important properties, which it is hoped will be of inestimable value to the cultural and social life of the South Wales of tomorrow. Thanks to the Miners' Welfare Commission, the Pilgrim Trust and the Council of the National Eisteddfod, the Pavilion, Mountain Ash, has now been secured in perpetuity for the cultural uses of the people of Wales.

Almost at the same time the Council accepted from Miss Bowker of Newport, the munificent gift of Cwmbran House, Pontnewydd, and plans for its use are in an advanced stage.

There is little we wish to add to this summarised report except an urgent appeal for financial support. There is much that is good, but little that is spectacular about our present work. Some of it is taken for granted, while the necessity of other parts of it is, perhaps, not always understood. It is inevitable, too, that more urgent, more popular, needs and funds should attract monies from private sources that normally reach the Council. Our economies have been great, but our work is greater. Will you help us to maintain it?

The following officers of the Council are now on active service :

- Sir Leonard Twiston Davies, K.B.E., Chairman—Flying Officer, R.A.F.
- Neil Collins, P.T. Organiser—Lt.-Col., Warwickshire Regiment.
- Eric L. Morris, Finance Officer—Pilot Officer, R.A.F.
- A. R. Beale, Assistant P.T. Organiser—Merchant Service.
- R. S. Kelway, Area Officer—Major, Quartering Command.
- J. W. Roberts, Rural Advisory Officer—Welsh Guards.
- Llew. Rees, P.T. Instructor—Army P.T. Staff.
- R. H. Coleman, P.T. Instructor—Army P.T. Staff.
- Leslie Morgan, P.T. Instructor—Army P.T. Staff.
- G. Treharne, Craft Instructor—Welch Regiment.
- H. Haigh, Welfare Officer—Royal Armoured Corps.

THE SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (INCORPORATED).

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 1940.

LIABILITIES AND CREDIT BALANCES.		ASSETS AND DEBIT BALANCES.	
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<b>CREDIT BALANCES ON THE FOLLOWING FUND ACCOUNTS—</b>		<b>DEBIT BALANCES ON THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS—</b>	
Subscriptions and Donations earmarked for specific purposes	73 3 6	General Funds	749 3 4
Equipment Grants	15 11 2	Education	125 19 7
Health Services	1,537 5 4		
Libraries	394 18 9	<b>EXPENDITURE CARRIED FORWARD—</b>	
Welsh Fair Reserve Fund	1,930 18 9	Cost of Enforced Removal due to Requisition of Premises	229 15 7
Rural Development Reserve Fund	3,575 4 4	Less Amount recoverable to 31st March, 1940	143 9 7
	4,435 4 4		866 2 11
	6,356 3 1	<b>SUNDRY DEBITORS—</b>	
<b>MOUNTAIN ASH PAVILION FUND—</b>		Grants receivable as certified by the Finance Officer	1,932 18 3
Amount received towards proposed purchase of Mountain Ash Pavilion	1,000 0 0	Pembrokeshire Community Council	166 7 10
Less Expenditure incurred to date	4 10 0	Other Amounts	339 8 8
	995 10 0		2,438 14 9
Sundry Creditors	3,699 8 5	<b>LOAN TO ST. ATHANS AND DISTRICT FILM SOCIETY—</b>	
		Balance at beginning of Year	60 0 0
		Less Amount Repaid during year	30 0 0
			30 0 0
		<b>CASH AT BANK</b>	7,629 17 10
			<u>£11,051 1 6</u>

(Signed)

R. B. WILLIAMS, Chairman  
J. LEWIS MORGAN, Hon. Treasurer  
JULIAN REES, Director

For the  
Committee of  
Management

Cardiff, 24th October, 1940.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (INCORPORATED)

We have audited the above Balance Sheet dated 31st March, 1940, and have obtained all the information and explanation we have required.

In our opinion, such Balance Sheet is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of the Company's affairs, according to the best of our information, and the explanations given us and as shown by the Books of the Company.

(Signed) WENTWORTH PRICE, GADSBY & CO.,  
Auditors.

Cardiff, 25th October, 1940.

THE SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (INCORPORATED).

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1940

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<b>To EXPENDITURE DURING YEAR—</b>						
Administration, Specialist and Advisory Services to Clubs (Men and Women) .. .. .	20,050	11	4			
Women's Work—Refund of Grant .. .. .	823	0	0			
Schools and Courses .. .. .	75	17	7			
Carnegie (U.K.) Trust Fund .. .. .	251	5	5			
Subscriptions and Donations for specific Purposes .. .. .	582	5	10			
General Funds .. .. .	133	9	4			
Equipment Grants Account .. .. .	888	3	8			
Miscellaneous Grants per N.C.S.S. .. .. .	160	12	5			
Juvenile Organisations (Schools) .. .. .	81	0	0			
Education .. .. .	43,581	17	0			
Summer Camps .. .. .	2,545	9	10			
Health Services .. .. .	7,768	6	6			
Libraries .. .. .	823	2	9			
Rural Services .. .. .	948	2	1			
Rural Development Reserve .. .. .	200	0	0			
				48,913	3	9
<b>DEBIT BALANCES AT BEGINNING OF YEAR .. .. .</b>				880	19	4
<b>CREDIT BALANCES AT END OF YEAR .. .. .</b>				6,356	3	1
				<u>£56,150</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>BY INCOME DURING YEAR—</b>						
Administration, Specialist and Advisory Services to Clubs (Men and Women) .. .. .	18,603	1	0			
Women's Work .. .. .	—	—	—			
Schools and Courses .. .. .	52	2	2			
Carnegie (U.K.) Trust Fund .. .. .	300	0	0			
Subscriptions and Donations for specific Purposes .. .. .	542	7	11			
General Funds .. .. .	206	8	11			
Equipment Grants Account .. .. .	892	10	3			
Miscellaneous Grants per N.C.S.S. .. .. .	139	5	6			
Juvenile Organisations (Schools) .. .. .	81	0	0			
Education .. .. .	14,047	1	0			
Summer Camps .. .. .	2,460	6	11			
Health Services .. .. .	9,247	9	4			
Libraries .. .. .	—	—	—			
Rural Services .. .. .	767	10	10			
				46,739	3	10
<b>CREDIT BALANCES AT BEGINNING OF YEAR .. .. .</b>				8,544	19	5
<b>DEBIT BALANCES AT END OF YEAR .. .. .</b>				866	2	11
				<u>£56,150</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>