

Letter from Home

The British Home in California, Ltd.

Great DBE Day at the Faire!



The Annual Faire was held on Saturday, 6th June, under the auspices of the Daughters of The British Empire (DBE) in California. The event started at 10 AM with a DBE members parade of flags, escorted by our two magnificent



Beefeaters, and Cindi McIntosh, piping in the British Consul-General, Bob Peirce, and his wife, Sharon Harroun Peirce. Bob officially opened the Faire with his usual eloquence. This year there were fifteen participating Chapters, all having a wonderful array of goodies to sell, including traditional British bangers, sausage rolls, and pork pies. Queen Victoria Chapter once again provided 'Victorian' English Teas on the patio.

The booth decoration competition was judged by the Consul-General's Executive

Assistant, Gillian Nathan and her mother, Dorothy. The first place rosette was awarded to Westminster Chimes Chapter; second place went to Kew Gardens, and third to Court of St. James. Congratulations to all the Chapters who did such a fine job of decorating their booths! Miss English Piggy was again in attendance and did a wonderful job selling raffle tickets; she was assisted by Kermit the Frog. The British

Bobby was again in attendance, keeping a watchful eye on the movement of access

traffic. Home Residents helped on the Home Collectables and Arts and Crafts Booths; they really enjoy meeting everyone. Our Activities Director, Connie Mercer,

works with them all year to produce these crafts for sale at the Faire. The weather was part sun and part cloud; some visitors said it was typical English weather (it rained the day before), perhaps explaining the very good turn-out. We were entertained by the Scottish Dancers and the Margaret Cleary Irish Dancers both of which encouraged audience participation after their set performances! This year we were also

July 23, 2009

Volume 5, Issue 3

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entertained by a very skilled band of Scottish Fiddlers.

It's thought that this Faire was one of our most successful; the final figures are due to be published shortly to confirm that belief.



Anne Carver - Director

Anne was born in Shropshire but from the age of 4 lived and went to school in Bristol. She finished school with a couple of "O" levels and although she wanted to pursue a career in the Theatre, her first love, went to work for Midland Bank. A year later in 1960, with her family, Anne arrived in San Francisco, CA., with a "bang" as it was November 5th, (Guy Fawkes Day). The third day she was there she got a job with Wells Fargo Bank. The man that interviewed her for the job had been stationed near Weymouth so the first 30 minutes was spent talking about England and the last 10 minutes talking about the job! Anne's family couldn't settle in the USA so, after three



months, they returned to England and left Anne to fend for herself. This was difficult at first as Anne had never lived alone and 6,000 miles was a long way from home! Things improved as she developed

friendships at work and joined an amateur dramatics club so was able to keep up her interest in the theatre.

In 1963 Anne met her husband-to-be Jim and they were married on January 1st, 1964, an easy date to remember. They moved to Southern California where Jim worked part time and also went to college. By the time he got his degree they had two sons, James and Shaun. As soon as Jim got his degree he was offered a job in New Jersey so off they went on what would be the first of about 32 moves! Jim was in the electronic industry and kept getting offered interesting jobs all over the place. The boys thought that everyone was supposed to spend each school grade in a different

place! However, in 1980 the family slowed down and the boys were able to attend the same high school. During all this time Anne worked off and on in the banking industry, just to keep her hand in. Also at this time Jim started his own company.

In 1982 Anne was taking out the garbage cans when the next door neighbour introduced herself, Wendy Herbert of Carisbrooke Castle Chapter told her all about DBE and took her to the next Chapter meeting. The rest is history as they say - Anne served in various positions at the chapter level and was also Regent of Carisbrooke Castle Chapter. In 1987 Jim and Anne moved to Carlsbad, CA, and she trans-

ferred to Botany Bay Chapter. There she served as Regent and also as 1st Vice President on the State Board. Finally in 2000 Jim sold his business and they retired and moved to Spain for two years. On their return they de-



ecided to make Portland, Oregon, their home as their eldest son lives there as do other members of the family. Their other son, Shaun, lives and works in Beijing, China.

Since living in Portland, Anne is once again involved in DBE and is a member of Emily Carr Chapter and is also serving as State President. She has always appreciated all the friendships made through the DBE and still is in contact with many of them. Support of the Home in California is of great importance to her and she hopes to continue encouraging everyone in that endeavour. Jim and Anne have been married for 45 years and continue to enjoy their life and retirement.

100 Year Old Resident - Nell Parks

One hundred years ago a baby girl, later christened Nell, was born in the city of Winnipeg, Canada to Ellen and Harry Murch. The young couple had been living out of town in a settlement, carved out of virgin forest, attached to the huge power plant where Harry worked. When the baby's arrival became imminent, it was necessary to come into the city to the home of an English-trained midwife, at



whose home Ellen stayed until she was able to return to her own home with her new baby.

Both Ellen and Harry were British; Ellen came to Canada when she was five years old; Harry, a French polisher by trade, came as an adult.

Nell was the oldest of seven surviving children, having two sisters and four brothers. Two of her brothers were born in the United States since, in 1923, when Nell was 15, her parents decided they had had enough of the long, cold winters. They moved to Pasadena where Nell attended Pasadena High School, a far cry from the two-room school house on the settlement. Three brothers served in World War II; one received the Silver Star.

Nell's adult life included working in an insurance of-



fice for many years, teaching writing classes, working in the California State Franchise Tax Office and, for the final 10 years of her working life, in the Department of Rehabilitation Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program. She was married twice, initially to an Englishman by whom she had a son. After 10 years they divorced and Nell subsequently married an American with whom she moved back to Winnipeg temporarily. She then moved back to California after her husband died.

Nell has published many articles and has completed a novel. At one time she was a member of

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Julia Cunningham - Harpist Extraordinaire

We welcomed Julia to the Home on Wednesday June 25th. Julia's recital was a generous gift to our Residents by Sharon Harroun Peirce, wife of the British Consul-General. Julia was born in Saskatchewan and began playing the piano as soon as she could reach it. By the time she started playing the harp she already had a passion for music. Julia received her Bachelor of music

degree from The University of Victoria and a Master of music degree from Yale. High profile engagements have included concerts for Pope John Paul II at the Vatican and performing with Pavarotti in Italy. Special events



also included performances for Oprah Winfrey, the Prince of Monaco, and the Prince of Wales. We were honored to have Julia play for the British Home Residents and guests, and thrilled by her wonderfully relaxing music.

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Nell Parks (continued)

the League of American Pen Women and was president of the Pen Women of Point Loma. She was a member of the Star of India Auxiliary and edited their newsletter for six years.

Nell entered the British Home in Sierra Madre in 1992 and remains as sharp and alert as someone half her age. She continues to do plastic canvas work and is working on her second novel.

One of her proudest achievements is being the matriarch of a multi-generational family. Her son has three sons who, in turn, have nine children (Nell's great grandchildren). A great-great granddaughter was born in May, making five generations living at this time.

Nell's 100th birthday was celebrated in fine style at the British Home. She looked lovely in a pale green outfit with an or-



child corsage. Her happiness at being surrounded by her extended family was evident. Between 70 and 100 people attended (estimates vary) and enjoyed a delicious luncheon buffet prepared by the staff at the Home. Everyone toasted Nell with Champagne and Nell addressed the group with a minimum of notes. All were impressed.

The celebrations continued. Shortly afterwards, her friends from DBE Caernarvon Chapter held another party for her at Norma Wright's home. According to Nell, it was a great time; she was made "Queen for the day"!

Jill Southworth

