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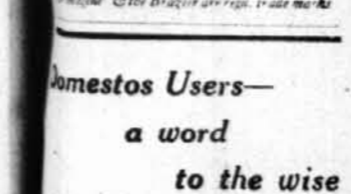

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## WAR TIME STORY OF H.M.S. ZETLAND.

### BARNARD CASTLE'S ADOPTED SHIP.

H.M.S. Zetland has ended (at least for the time being) her active career, having been ordered to reduce to reserve at Portsmouth, and in a letter of thanks to Barnard Castle town for the interest and generous gifts that went to the ship of the town's adoption, Lt.-Commander Bax, R.N., has told something of the war-time adventures of this ship. It makes interesting reading, and we are happy to reproduce it for our readers.

H.M.S. Zetland was completed by Messrs Yarrows, of Scotstoun, on 16th June, 1942. Her first Commanding Officer, who remained in the ship until March, 1944, was Lieutenant-Commander J. V. Wilkinson, R.N. After her trials she was based at Londonderry for the first few months of her operational career.

**Escorted Malta Convoy.**

The high-light of this period was a trip to Gibraltar to join the escort of a Malta convoy. This was the first time the ship was in action and provided her guns' crew with just the practice that they needed. They were firing at hostile aircraft almost continually for three days, and the ship emerged unscathed. When the Sicilian Narrows were reached, an escort from Malta took over, and Zetland returned to Gibraltar.

**Took Part in Algiers Assault.**

In October, 1942, she joined the large force which was gathering for the North African landings. She was concerned in the original assault on Algiers. It was here that she went to the assistance of the damaged destroyer "Broke," which had rammed the boom at full speed to clear the channel. Zetland had her in tow for some time but, when the weather deteriorated, had to give up the attempt, and took off the survivors.

That winter and spring she was engaged chiefly on the continuous service of troop convoys from Algiers to Bone, which kept the First Army supplied and became known as the "Bone Ferry." This was particularly arduous service, as the enemy were still strong in the air in that sector, and their U-boats were naturally extremely active on our supply lines.

When the enemy were finally evacuating North Africea, in April, 1943, the ship carried out a series of patrols in the Narrows off Cape Bon and had the satisfaction of intercepting several escape craft, and taking many prisoners. During these operations she suffered several near-misses from bombs, which caused serious structural damage, and in June she received orders to return home and refit at Jarrow-on-Tyne, in Messrs Palmer's Yard

The refit was completed in August, and after a short working-up period at Scapa, Zetland returned to the Medidterranean Station. By this time Sicily had been occupied and the landings in Southern Italy were taking place. For the next few months Zetland was employed escorting the convoys which took the Eighth Army's supplies from Augusta in Sicily up to the advanced base at Bari, Italy.

**In Bari Air Raid.**

On the night of 1st December, 1943, Zetland was in harbour at Bari when the celebrated Bari air raid took place, perhaps the most successful attack the Luftwaffe ever made on an Allied harbour. In a very short space of time 17 Merchant ships were sunk in the harbour, and the danger to the survivors from blazing tankers and ammunition ships was acute. Zetland was ordered to get under way and tow a blazing petrol carrier clear of the harbour. Zetland herself had suffered considerable superficial damage from near misses, but she got under way and made repeated attempts under very trying conditions to take the petrol carrier in tow. When this eventually proved impossible, she connected the tow rope to an adjacent tanker and took her out of harbour. There followed a period of six weeks in dockyard hands at Taranto to make good the damage suffered at Bari.

At the beginning of March, Lieutenant-Commander Wilkinson was relieved by Lieutenant-Commander C. R. Bax, R.N.

In the spring and summer of 1944 the ship was employed first in the Adriatic, during which several bombardments of the Yugo-Slav coastline, notably Dobrovnik, were carried out, and later in the Tyrhennian Sea working from Naples. She was present at the assault on Elba, and later at the invasion of Southern France.

**Engagement with Scarpanto Shore Batteries.**

In September, 1944, she was ordered to the Eastern Mediterranean for the forthcoming operations in the Aegean. That month she assisted in the destruction of the last U-boat to be sunk in the Mediterranean, bombarded merchant shipping in Argostoli Harbour and had a sharp engagement with shore batteries in Pegadia Bay, Scarpanto. Slight damage was sustained in the latter action, and this took ten days to repair at Alexandria.

During the autumn, Zetland continued to operate in the Aegean and round the coast of Greece, being included in the force which originally re-occupied Athens and taking the first convoy to Salonica.

**Defeated Five Enemy E-Boats in Night Action.**

At the end of January, 1945, Zetland was ordered home to join the forces in the North Sea engaged in protecting our convoy routes to the Continent. At that time enemy E-Boates were becoming increasingly active in the North Sea and constituted a serious threat to the Army's communications. For the remainder of the war the ship was based at Harwich and had one exciting night action with a force of five enemy E-Boats which withdrew in disorder.

When the war ended in Europe Zetland was sent to Alexandria to be converted for service in the Tropics preparatory to proceeding to the Far East. However, the Japanese War ended before this conversion was complete, and the ship was ordered home again.

**Operation "Deadlight."**

Her final fling was in Operation "Deadlight"—the sinking of the 110 surrendered U-Boats which were held in British ports. These had to be towed out to the North-West of Ireland and sunk by gunfire, a difficult and tedious operation in the North Atlantic in winter.

On 9th February, 1946, Zetland reduced to reserve at Portsmouth.

## LARTINGTON GOLDEN WEDDING.

A happy Golden Wedding was celebrated on Thursday at "The Beeches," Lartington, the couple being Mr and Mrs Hare. Married at Bowes on March 7th, 1896, Mr and Mrs Hare have both lived to be octogenarians. Mr Hare is 81 years old and Mrs Hare 84, and both are still in excellent health. Much of their married life has been spent farming, and many will remember them at the "Rigg" and "Cragg" Farms. They retired to The Beeches 28 years ago. There is one daughter of the marriage, Mrs F. Anderson. Mr and Mrs Hare are staunch Methodists. At the Golden Wedding celebration party, Mr and Mrs John Walton, of Eggleston (who recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding) were present. Mrs Walton is a sister of Mrs Hare. The combined ages of the two couples makes a good total of longevity, 336 years Mr and Mrs Hare have received many expressions of good wishes upon their Golden Wedding anniversary.

## MIDDLETON PLANS FOUR-DAY CARNIVAL.

### BRASS BAND CONTEST, ALL-ENGLAND WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP, ETC.

Although some time must elapse before Middleton Hospital Carnival is held, the committee, which met on Tuesday evening under the chairmanship of Dr. Dawson, have made some ambitious plans for this year's effort. From their intentions it would appear that, given of course suitable weather, the 1946 effort will equal if not surpass some of Middleton's best pre-war carnivals. It is to be a four-day event, Friday, May 31st, June 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and in addition to the usual opening ceremonies, Saturday parade and evening dances, the committee are to stage a brass band contest, with a promise already of eight competing bands. Wrestling under the Cumberland and Westmorland Association again take a large place in the sporting events, and negotiations in progress are expected to result in the 11 stones All-England Wrestling Championship Cup being allocated for competition on the Saturday. There will be additional wrestling at other weights, and other popular sporting events. It is hoped that a return visit from a Darlington Male Voice Choir will be fixed for the Sunday.

The committee have in addition taken over the date, August 3rd, lately used by the Local Lads' Committee, as a sports day, and hope to stage a similar sporting programme for foot events and horse sports. Approximately £110 will be offered at this extra effort in prize money. The resignation of Mr G. Fleming as sports secretary was received, and Mr T. Bellas was appointed as his successor, with Mr J. Shaw as assistant to Mr A. Shepherd as general secretary.

## COUN. E. W. BOXALL.

### RETIRING FROM URBAN AUTHORITY.

Another member of the Barnard Castle Urban Council who will not seek re-election is Coun. E. W. Boxall. For ten years he has been a member of the Council. He was Chairman during the momentous period 1939-40. His term of office saw the outbreak of war, the opening of the new Council Offices, and the resignation of Mr J. Ingram Dawson, who had been Clerk for some 50 years. He inaugurated the Red Cross Fund and the Thetis Fund, and various other war-time measures.

Mr Boxall, who is a member of an old Sussex family, came to Barnard Castle in 1925 as the staff representative of the "Darlington and Stockton Times." He is prominently identified with various organisations, has written two pageants for Barnard Castle and two for Middleton-in-Teesdale. He is an altar server at the Catholic Church.

## REMARKABLE WHIST DRIVE AT BOWES.

### CHAMPIONSHIP "PIG" ATTRACTS BIGGEST EVER CROWD.

"Never before in living memory has such a whist drive been known in Bowes Schoolroom," was the remark passed on last Friday evening's whist drive in aid of the above fund. Fifty-seven tables were occupied and the M.C.'s had a very difficult and strenuous task in finding enough tables and cards for this large crowd, and most of all, room to accommodate them. The committee are very grateful to all who came and gave their support. The chief attraction was no doubt the championship "pig," and congratulations must go to Mr W. J. Pickersgill, who had the remarkable score of 192. Mrs Butler kindly presented the prizes to the following: Mr W. J. Pickersgill. Ladies—1, Mrs Spooner; 2, Mrs Atkinson. Gents—1, Mr E. Parratt; 2, Mrs Bales. Mr Lewis proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Butler for coming along and presenting the prizes. Although the whist was somewhat prolonged, a very enjoyable dance commenced at 11 p.m. to music by Mrs Preston's band, and a very nice supper was supplied and handed round by committee ladies.

It was very encouraging to see visitors who had come some distance, travelling by bus, and even as far distant as Butterknowle. It would no doubt appear to many on Friday evening that what is required at Bowes is definitely a parish hall.

The whist drive was ably carried out by Mr T. Satterthwaite, Mr J. Atkinson, Mr Allan, Mr Lewis, and Mr S. Luck. Door-keepers for the dance were Allan Atkinson and Walker. M.C.'s for the dance were Mr T. Satterthwaite and Mr H. Lewis.

**U.D.C. Minutes.**

The minutes of the Urban District Council are now open to inspection by members of the Mechanics' Institute, as the Clerk is leaving monthly a copy in the Reading Room at the Witham Hall.

## FOOTBALL.

### DURHAM AMATEUR CUP.

BARNARD CASTLE ATHLETIC, 0; TOW LAW, 3.

After playing a draw with Tow Law away from home, Barnard Castle Athletic made an inglorious exit from the Durham Amateur Cup on Saturday, when they were defeated three goals to nil at home. Before the season's record gate, and with another attractive home draw if they could win, they served up one of the poorest exhibitions of the season. They were one goal down at half-time, and no doubt thought that downhill they would easily wipe out that deficit—but they found wishful thinking would not produce goals, and their second half exhibition was confined to just that. The goals came to Tow Law in raids that classed them much above the Athletic standard. The game ended: Tow Law, 3; Barnard Castle Athletic, nil; and Tow Law missed a penalty.

The Athletic should have had two goals in the first half. Barker missed one glorious chance even though he was allowed two attempts from four feet out. The other, Frank Cross, was unlucky when he headed a cross pass wide of the goal.

Barker was weak and seldom attempted to regain control after losing the ball. Tempers became frayed in the second half and the referee had to caution two Athletic players and one Tow Law man. Lee, the Barney 'keeper, played quite well; he had much less work than the previous week. He should have prevented the third goal, but uncovered his goal sufficient to allow a raider's shot to find the net.

The second half offered few chances to the Athletic, and these few were frittered away. The result was a fair reflex of the game, and our hopes of Barney winning the coveted trophy in 1946 are ended.

## MICKLETON AND FOREST HOLD AGRICULTURAL QUIZ.

Mickleton Young Farmers' Club, at the invitation of Forest Club, sent a team consisting of three Club members and three Advisory Committee members to take part in an agricultural quiz. Mr Philip Beadle, J.P., was the question master and announced Mickleton Club as the winner. The visiting team comprised Mr T. Addison, Mr W. Raine and Mr Lamb (Advisory Committee), and Miss W. Raine, Miss B. Foster and Mr I. Pinkney. They were opposed to Mr J. L. Walton, Mr R. Beadle and Mr T. Walton (representing the Advisory Committee), and Miss K. Walton, Mr A. Walton and Mr Eddie Bell, Club members. The visiting team was thanked for their help in the evening's proceedings; and Mr P. Beadle had a vote of thanks from Miss M. Sanderson for adjudicating.

On Saturday, March 2nd, the Club sent a team to Northallerton to take part in a speaking competition, the speaker being Miss Ena Addison, under the chairmanship of Mr W. Alderson, and Miss Betty Foster proposing a vote of thanks. The competition was of a very high standard, and although the Club team was not among the four finalists, they gave a very worthy performance and are to be congratulated on their first adventure. The subject of the speaker was "Poultry keeping and rearing." The meeting to-morrow (Thursday) will consist of a speech by Mr T. B. Foster, farrier, of Barnard Castle. All members and friends are invited.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### POST OFFICE SERVICES.

To the Editor of the Teesdale Mercury.

Sir,—Owing to an unfortunate error in letters to the Barnard Castle Urban District Council, the Barnard Castle Rural District Council, and the Startforth Rural District Council, an incorrect impression has been given that agreement is being sought by the Union of Post Office Workers to the cessation of Sunday collections in the Barnard Castle and Startforth areas.

The Union merely desire the suspension of the collection on Saturdays after the first collection and only in cases where a Sunday collection follows.

The Councils mentioned have been asked to reconsider the matter in this light, and I should be obliged if this correction could be given equivalent publicity to that afforded the reports of the Council meetings at which the question of the cessation of Sunday collections was debated.

Yours faithfully,

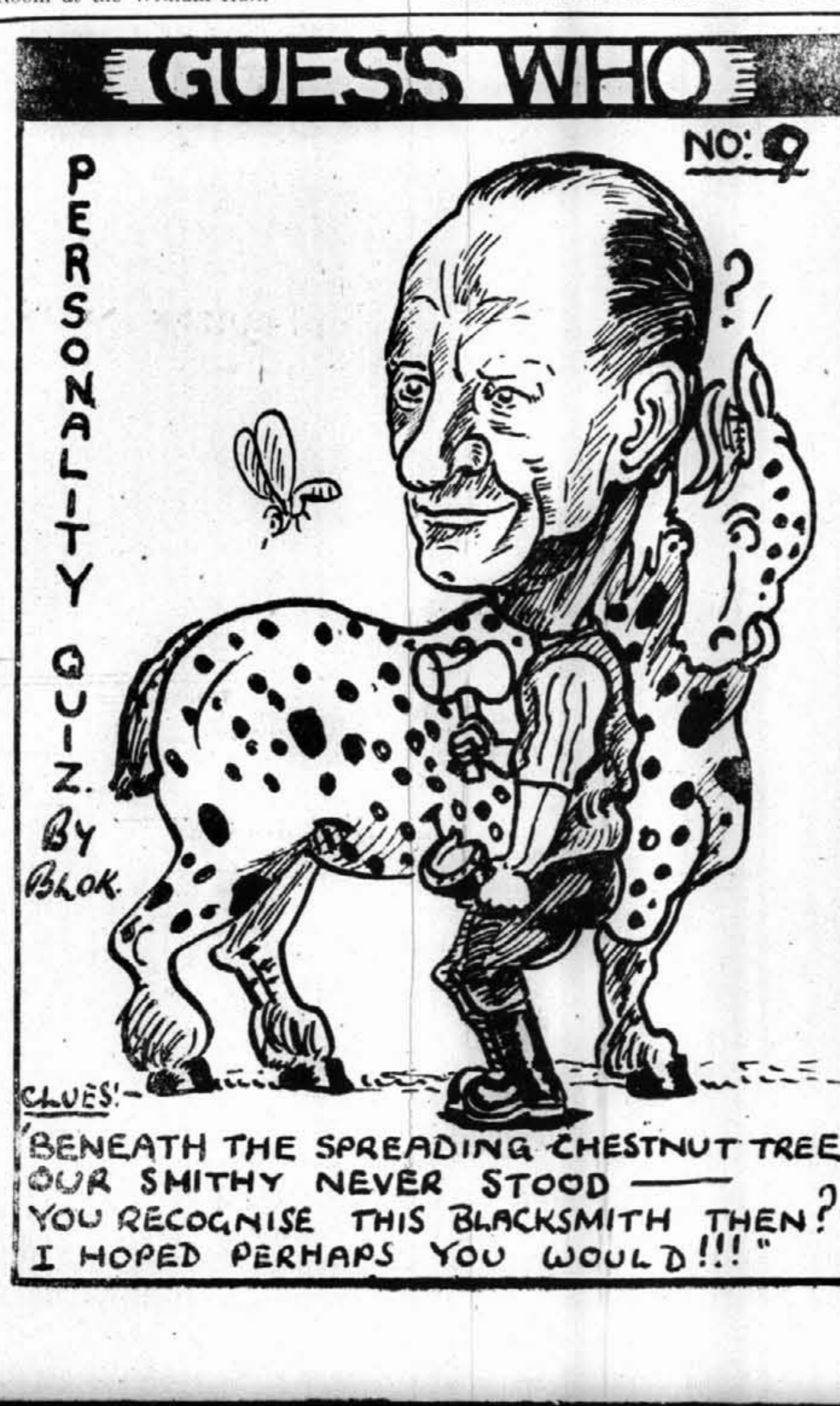
F. R. NICHOLSON, Head Postmaster.

Darlington,

6th March, 1946.

**Eggleston Induction.**

The institution and induction of the Rev. R. C. Thornton, M.A., to the vicariate of Eggleston will take place on Wednesday evening next by the Lord Bishop of Durham and the Rural Dean of Barnard Castle.





## LOCAL & DISTRICT NOTES.

**Cricket Club Captain Candidate.**

We are informed that Mr Roy Watson, the popular captain of Barnard Castle Cricket Club, is to be a candidate for the forthcoming Urban District Council election.

**Barnard Castle Whist.**

At the weekly whist drive held at the Co-op. Hall by the local Labour Party, the following were prizewinners: Ladies—1, Mrs Roche; 2, Mrs Barker; travelling and sealed prizes, Miss W. Bell. Gents—1, Mr H. Waine; 2, Mr Tolley; sealed, Mrs Parkin and Mrs Hodgson shared; travelling, Mrs Parkin. Mrs L. Waine was M.C.

**Barnard Castle Welcome Home.**

The Barnard Castle Welcome Home Fund will be distributed to eligible men and women of H.M. Forces at Woodleigh, Barnard Castle, on Thursday, March 21st, and Saturday, March 23rd, between the hours of 10-30 a.m. and 5 p.m. each day. The amount will be £2 each, together with a printed souvenir. Will recipients please call in person, if possible.

**Engagement.**

An engagement of local interest is announced this week of Michael Bishop, R.E., of Whitstable, Kent, and Marjorie Bains Mason. Mrs Mason (formerly Miss Emmerson) will be remembered by Barnard Castle people as an old member of the Operatic Society and Tennis Club. Her parents are now resident at Cherry Tree Cottage, Cotherstone.

**Barnard Castle Congregationalists.**

An entertainment by the Dauber Brothers Concert Party formed the chief item of a Shrovetide service held in the Barnard Castle Congregational Church Schoolroom on Tuesday of last week, and once again this popular party delighted the audience with its variety entertainment of quartettes, solos, and handbell selections. The Rev. E. M. Smith presided. The guests were welcomed by Mr and Mrs W. J. Brooks (host and hostess). An excellent supper was served by the ladies of the church, after which party games were enjoyed by the young people.

**Bowes Women's Institute.**

There was a good attendance at the monthly meeting of Bowes Women's Institute. Hostesses were Mesdames H. Thompson, Turnbull, and Tweddle. A competition, "Something new from something old," judged by Mesdames Allen and C. Addison, was won by Mrs Atkinson and Mrs J. S. Brown. A most interesting lecture was given by Miss Joyce Gargett on "The History of English Drama." The social half-hour was held with Mesdames Robinson, Richardson and Scrafton in charge, prizes being won by Miss Addison and Miss Leighton. It was decided to nominate a candidate from the Women's Institute for the Parish Council election. All agreed that Mrs Peacock, who has given many years' valued service to the Women's Institute, be asked to stand. The next meeting, on March 28th, is to be an open night, and a whist drive will be held. On March 30th a Women's Institute exhibition is to be held in Bowes Grammar School.

**Cotherstone Women's Institute.**

A particularly enjoyable afternoon was spent on Thursday by the members of the Cotherstone Women's Institute, when Mrs Adamson presided, and Mrs Angus Robson gave an excellent demonstration on supper and sweet dishes. The festive nature of these being a happy change from the usual austerity variety. Miss Birkett's informal talk on her recent broadcasting experiences at Newcastle was most interesting and provoked many questions, personal and otherwise. For the edification of new members, of whom there was a good number, Mrs Adamson read the rules for Women's Institute members. A letter from Mrs Hewitt, a past and beloved member, was read by Miss Walton. Mrs Robson had a difficult task in judging the rock bun competition as there was a very large entry. Mrs T. Bayles and Mrs Pearson were the winners. The M.O.I. film on gardening, to be shown at the March meeting, should be interesting and helpful. A large attendance is expected.

**Labour Party Candidates for Barnard Castle U.D.C. Election.**

At a meeting of Barnard Castle Local Labour Party held on Saturday, which was well attended and at which some lively discussion took place, the following candidates for the Urban District Council Election Panel (six names) were approved as follows:—The Party Chairman, Mr W. Brook; the Party secretary, Mr H. Kealey; chairman, women's section, Mrs E. A. Robinson; secretary, women's section, Mrs L. Kealey; treasurer, general section, Mrs H. Barker; literature secretary, Miss M. Gowling. Mr H. Kealey was invited to take on the duties of Election Agent for the Urban District Council Election, and accepted the responsibility, and warned the candidates that some very strenuous work was facing them in their fight for election, but still more strenuous times were ahead of them should they be successfully elected, as an enormous programme of work faced the future Council members. The leeway of the war years, when none or very little construction work took place, would have to be made up. This work included housing, sanitation, and street improvements.

**Copley Women's Institute.**

The meeting of Copley Women's Institute was held on Monday in the Literary Institute. There was a very good attendance. Mrs E. Wilkinson presided. Mrs R. Appleby gave the creed and Mrs E. Mott the motto. Dr. Redmond was to have attended the meeting to speak, but was unavoidably detained. The competition was for the prettiest jug, ancient and modern (two classes). Two judges were appointed, but Mrs D. Blackett won in both classes. Mrs Syd. Elliott was elected to attend the spring council meeting held at Bishop Wearmouth, Sunderland, on the 30th inst. Mrs Croft was elected to attend the N.F.W.I. meeting to be held in London in May. Mrs G. Marr will accompany her as visitor. Six eggs were sold for three shillings by auction; a bar of soap and a tin of Cherry Blossom were sold for 2s. 1d. A purse given by Mrs Thompson was won by Mrs G. Rose. Miss Walker and Mrs Raw were pianists. Two new members were proposed and accepted. Supper was served by Mrs Croft and Mrs Johnson. Mrs G. Marr reported on the Produce Guild meeting she had attended.

**Staindrop Good Templars.**

The 40th anniversary of the institution of the Hope of Staindrop Lodge of the International Order of Good Templars took place on Thursday night at the Friends' Meeting House, when Mr J. Armstrong, Grand Guard (Gateshead) was the guest speaker. Representatives were also present from Darlington, Cockfield, and Evenwood Lodges. Miss Bainbridge, the secretary, submitted the annual report of the year's work, which showed great activity and an increase in members. Harmony was provided by Mr R. Armstrong (Keverstone), and an enjoyable time was spent. Early in the week a small fire broke out in the roof and but for the prompt action of the caretaker would have proved serious. The celebration was continued on Saturday night, when the Gateshead I.O.G.T. Choir attended and gave a delightful concert. A good audience loudly applauded the various items in appreciation of the part-singing of the performers. Mr J. G. Heslop was the chairman, and certificates and prizes were awarded to the following Juvenile Templars who sat for the National Templar examination: Thomas Dinsley, Margaret Watson, Sheila Dale (1st class with honours), Olive Kellett, Kathleen Lawson, Dorothy Buttle, Hazel Burton, Shiela Rodwell, and Joan Mudd.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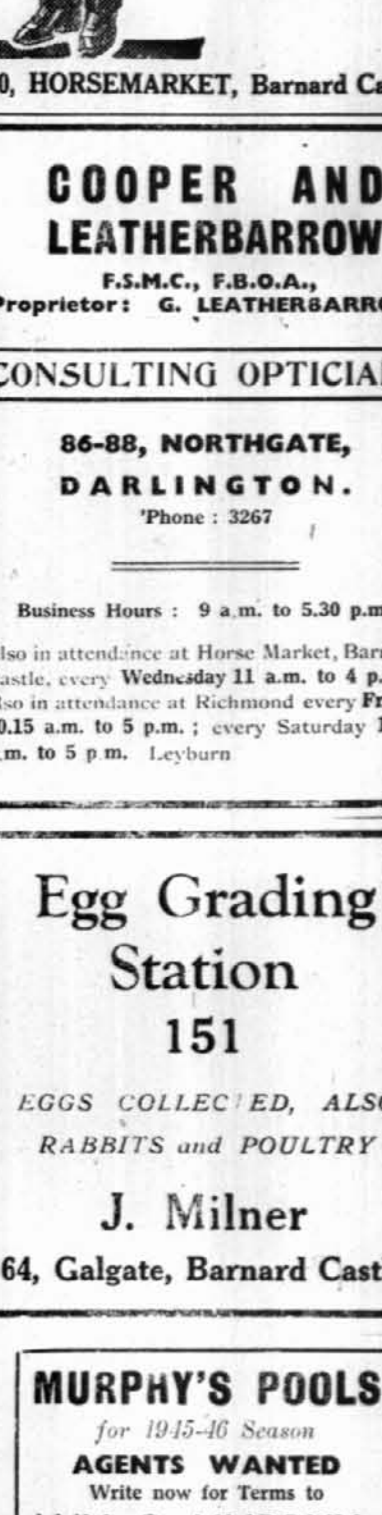

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