

VISCOUNTESS BARRINGTON'S
VILLAGE HOMES
AND
WELFARE INSTITUTION
FOR
DISABLED EX-SERVICE MEN.

Chairman—THE VISCOUNTESS BARRINGTON.

To whom all Cheques should be made payable, and
communications should be addressed to—

BECKETT, SHRIVENHAM, BERKS.

Hon. Treasurer—BERESFORD HEATON, ESQ.,
8, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.

Auditor—MR. G. E. TITLEY, *Chartered Accountant*.

Committee—

THE COUNTESS OF HALSBURY.

THE VISCOUNTESS STOPFORD.

THE LADY FFRENCH.

LADY LATTA.

LADY HARRIS.

MRS. MATHESON FRASER.

RT. HON. SIR FREDK. MILNER, BT.

F. WROTTESELEY, ESQ., K.C.

LADDIE CLIFF, ESQ.

TREVOR BURNETT-BROWN, ESQ.

AIMS AND OBJECTS.

In the new issue of the Leaflet, dealing with the work of this Association, it is well to explain that this Scheme, originally designed in 1913 for the revival of social life in village communities, was necessarily suspended in the following years, and when, towards the end of the War, its activities were to be renewed, it was recognized that in all plans for the brightening of village life, the claims of the disabled Ex-Service men in rural areas, must have the first consideration. Our objects, therefore, are now two-fold :-

- (1) **To provide disabled Ex-Service men in rural areas, having about 40% of disability with cottage homes in their native villages, and by finding for them suitable employment, to enable them to supplement their pensions and thus to earn a comfortable livelihood.**
 - (2) **To provide a Welfare Institute for social and educational purposes, and a Recreation Ground for sport and rest, where the amenities afforded, in tending to the revival of rural social life and increasing the health-giving properties of our Settlement will benefit alike the disabled men and the other inhabitants of the place.**
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At Shrivenham, in Berkshire, where the first example is seen of what is possible to achieve in these directions, our scheme has met with very considerable success.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

- (1) We have built round a Recreation Ground eight good cottages, with workshops and gardens attached, for disabled Ex-Service married men of the County, for which they pay 3/6 per week for the smaller houses, and 4/6 per week for the shop cottages

- (2) We have secured for these men the trades or occupations best suited to their capabilities and to the openings afforded in the neighbourhood, and which they could not have found for themselves

- (3) We have built a Welfare Institute for social and educational purposes, in which the various rooms meet the requirements of the smaller village functions and club meetings, while the big hall is used for larger entertainments. We have provided a Recreation Ground of twelve acres, where sports of all descriptions have been played in the last few years—while the football and playground for the children have been added since 1929.

Further, we have proved by our success at Shrivenham, that these undertakings can, with the rentals of the cottages, the bookings of the Hall and Institute Rooms, and the subscriptions of the Sports Clubs, be made entirely self-supporting and to cover all costs of maintenance and repairs.

HOW OUR WORK HAS PROGRESSED.

It is now twelve years since the commencement of our scheme, and the success of both sides of our work is seen in the fuller lives and growing prosperity of the inhabitants of Shrivenham and its neighbourhood, and still more important, in the material well-being and happiness of our disabled men. The occupations to be found for them were naturally our main consideration and we were fortunately able to provide the trades for which their earlier training had fitted them, but which they were unable to secure for themselves.

One man, who has lost a leg, is a bootmaker and works in the shop adjoining his cottage. Another who has lost an arm, is able to keep our Hall in excellent order and run the electric light. A third, whose health has suffered severely in the War, has a clerical billet in the Swindon workshops, and a fourth, who can only raise his arm to the level of his elbow, is employed on the land and is our groundsman. A lifeguardsman, whose wife keeps the village haberdashery shop, has been made overseer of this and adjoining parishes. Yet another, as bricklayer, has worked on our Institute since operations commenced, and is so much in request that he has never yet been out of work. As regards our latest applicant for a cottage - who has lost both legs - it is difficult to describe this man's content with the pleasant surroundings of his new home, as compared with the dingy rooms in Reading which he formerly inhabited, or his absorption in his humble attempts at poultry farming, carried out on a piece of land at the back of his house. In this instance the full pensions for total disablement and the allowances for his wife and children, make the family self-supporting, and independent of the pecuniary assistance from our Association, which, we have always deprecated giving save in exceptional circumstances. These various jobs found for the men of our Settlement, greatly increased their earning capacity, and it is interesting to note, as regards the selection of the work, that not one of them has wished to change his job from that day to this.

But as time advances, it is evident that War injuries will take their toll in due course, even if the healthy surroundings of our cottages and the open-air country life retard for a while the growth of illness or the development of disease. One of our earlier arrivals who occupied a settlement home for ten years, has succumbed

in the last few months to the effects of gas poisoning and his cottage will be given to another deserving Ex-Service man. Two others have lately been incapacitated from time to time from the effects of other injuries contracted in the War. Sad as these cases may be it is gratifying to think how illness and suffering is mitigated for those who have endured so much in our cause, by the advantages and comforts they enjoy in their cottage homes.

The success of our scheme, on its social side, has been equally satisfactory. Since the year 1926, when our Institute was opened for practical purposes, it has become the centre of all village life and interests and the home of the many Associations and Clubs of the district. Lectures, concerts, dances, theatricals and cinema performances have attracted numbers from adjacent towns and villages and the various activities involved have brought trade to the village and employment to its inhabitants and to the disabled men.

The wide appreciation of our Institute, and its use for County and village purposes, have made the building, as we always foretold, a financial asset, covering the deficit on less lucrative parts of our work, and making the whole scheme, save for the mortgage on the land and the loan to the Bank, more than pay its way. In the same way, the Recreation Ground, with its sports, tournaments, open-air fetes and North Berks competitions, is a useful source of income. Club subscriptions cover the groundsman's wages, while the daily takings from non-members more than defray upkeep and maintenance expenses.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

In the past few years our funds have suffered, in common with those of other charities, from the stringency of money affairs, and

the conviction held by many people that if the State takes over charity, under the guise of social work, subscriptions to private enterprise must necessarily suffer. It is evident, in our case, that the reduced income forthcoming from the Bridge Tournaments, which are now the substitute for the Souper Dansants and Matinees of former days, although sufficient to pay our running expenses, are quite inadequate to discharge our liabilities and complete our work as originally designed.

In our earlier programme, we included two more cottages for disabled men, a football ground for neutral matches, a second wing to the Hall, urgently needed as supplying the extra accommodation required, and a cricket pavilion, obviating the constant hiring of tents on fete days. A further ambition was the building of a laundry, which, in the great opening afforded for such an undertaking in the neighbourhood, should vastly increase our income and provide a small endowment fund.

But on the completion of the main part of our enterprise in 1926, when our mortgage remained unpaid, we decided that no fresh work could be undertaken until we were clear of debt. Since that time, the second wing of the Hall has been provided by a generous donor (thereby almost doubling our takings) and the expenses of levelling the football ground has been defrayed by the proceeds of two Bridge Tournaments. But other items of our intended work must remain in abeyance until our liabilities are discharged. They are not, save for a small endowment fund, an integral part of our scheme.

It is then our intention to hand over to Trustees a self-supporting unit of a type of Settlement we should like to see established throughout the counties of England.

For the expense of this undertaking need not necessarily deter others from following our example. Only one such enterprise is wanted in each county and like the one at Shrivenham, should completely pay its way. Cottages can now be built at half the price of war days, while village halls, already provided in many country places, would, if enlarged to meet modern requirements, save the heavy initial expense of a large and costly building.

FINANCIAL POSITION.

We have raised £28,000, partly by the indefatigable efforts of a London Committee, partly by large donations from those interested in the work, and also by the great generosity of members of the theatrical profession, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude which we can never repay. Again, in the earlier stages of our work, £2,000 most kindly given by the Red Cross Society and £1,000 the proceeds of a Berkshire Appeal - materially assisted the initiation of the scheme.

But we still have a mortgage of £3,000 to pay on the land and building, and a further loan to the bank of over £1,000. We believe that these two amounts, formidable as they appear, should not be unobtainable, in view of the continued liberality of our friends and the success which has attended our efforts hitherto.

With a view to the repayment of these debts we propose to issue in the near future a Special Appeal in Berkshire - the home of our enterprise - and a further appeal to City Companies and other Associations, giving yearly subscriptions to various charities. Already we have received a generous gift from one of the Companies, and from the War Charity funds of the Empress Club. Again, we hope to raise a further £1,000 by the subscription which our kind supporters definitely promise for the next three years.

AN APPEAL.

We earnestly appeal for help to discharge a debt which when once paid off, will make our enterprise self supporting, and to carry through a scheme which has the approval of the leading authorities - the Appointments Board and the Ministry of Pensions, and which has these added recommendations - that a Balance Sheet is published year by year, that there are no salaried officials and that all subscriptions are applied solely to the objects for which they are given.

We claim that this scheme has these unique features ; that it provides in a way hitherto unconsidered, for the happiness and well-being of disabled men in their own country villages ; that it gives scope to private enterprise and local effort in shouldering the national burden entailed on the Country by the War ; and that in adding to the attractions of country life, the wage-earning possibilities for those in rural areas, it contributes to the attainment of the long desired goal, i.e., the establishment throughout the countryside of happy and prosperous village communities.

THE BEST FORM OF WAR MEMORIAL.

As a War Memorial, again the scheme may well stand on its merits, for it associates a lasting testimonial to the memory of those who suffered and fell so nobly in our cause, with the provision of comfortable homes and a brighter and fuller social life for those who have survived.